PAKISTAN
AND UNTOUCHABILITY

CH. AFZAL HAQ
(AHRAR)

MAKTABA-E-URDU
: : LAHORE : :

1st Edition May, 1941
2nd Edition May, 1943

Published by Ch. Nazir Ahmed, Proprietor, Maktaba-e-Urdu 15, Circular Road, printed by Mirza Mohammad Sadiq at the Ripon Printing Press, Bull Road, Lahore.

FOREWORD

The communal question has grown so serious in India, especially since the inauguration of the Provincial Autonomy, that Pakistan has been prescribed to be the only panacea for all the Muslim ills. The Muslim League sees no other way of consolidating the position of the Musalmans of India than by establishing a separate home-land for them. But if this scheme, which aims at the segregation of Indian Muslims, is examined critically and rather dispassionately, the sane-minded Muslims will undoubtedly arrive at the conclusion that it is not a religious movement at all, but that it is solely inspired and engineered by political leaders, who simply exploit the religious susceptibilities of the Muslim masses. It is a primary need of the occasion that this vital issue must be analysed and judged at its intrinsic value. Although much has been said for and against the proposed scheme, I find that there is still scope for a disinterested commentary. The following few pages are an attempt in that direction.

This book was written last year in the Rawalpindi jail when I was undergoing imprisonment

under the Defence of India Rules. It could not see the light of day earlier as I had to proceed rather hurriedly to Karachi to recuperate my shattered health. Even now its publication is being rushed through, and I found practically no opportunity to go through the proofs.

I am very grateful to my young friend Mr. Abdullah Butt for the invaluable help he has rendered by looking through the proofs. It will be no exaggeration if I say that it would have been delayed still longer but for his untiring energy and enthusiasm.

Lastly I have to make an appeal to the reader to try to understand the outlook and the view-point which have been presented in this book and ignore its faults. I hope that my sincere voice, though feeble, shall have the desired effect.

KARACHI CH. AFZAL HAQ.
15th May, 1941

CONTENTS

I

THE PROBLEM

MR. JINNAH, like a ruthless terrorist, has thrown a bomb amidst us, creating chaos and confusion at a time when concerted action was our greatest need. The ultra-nationalist Jinnah has turned a rank communalist. It must set us thinking. The League resolution, which was passed at his instance aiming at the vivisection of this country into two parts, may be condemned as ill-timed if not wholly mischievous; but it reveals a sure sign of a serious ailment in the body politic of India. A clever politician as he is, he has taken full advantage of the present strained relations of the two major communities. Instead of applying the balm to heal the wounds he has thought it fit to apply the knife to cut the body into pieces. It is just possible that the Muslim League leaders may not be serious in carrying the Lahore resolution to its logical conclusion, but the ball has been set rolling and no one should be in doubt as to the serious consequences that will follow from it. The slogan of a separate Muslim nation is bound to create a deep impression on the Muslim masses. No one

can easily call a halt to the disintegrating tendencies of Muslim capitalists. Muslim masses are completely in the hands of these classes. The tendencies manifested by the upper classes are bound to capture the imagination of the Muslim community as a whole. It can unfortunately be concluded that the present differences will be accentuated so much that the past communal disturbances will pale into insignificance as compared with the future upheavals. The partition scheme of Mr. Jinnah is not still-born; on the contrary, the League has given birth to a many-headed monster which, if not properly controlled, is capable of doing immense harm. The question of questions is, how to control the menacing situation created by the League resolution. My answer is, that we should first dispassionately analyse the forces behind that demand and should know the causes of the trouble before suggesting any remedy for it.

The world to-day is amazed how the Nazi leaders built up their power on an absurd theory of the superiority of the Aryan race and how a most advanced nation of Europe meekly accepted the leadership of the so-called uncultured Hitler. It is absolutely essential to understand the history of communal relations in India before we try to grapple with the problem before

us. Wordy statements and high sounding platitudes will bear no fruit. They will rather worsen the situation. There is no denying the fact that communalism existed even before the advent of British Raj, and after India's conquest by the foreigners our national leaders did not try to take a realistic view of the situation, with the result that the situation practically went out of their hands. I quite frankly admit that our leaders tried to grapple with the political problems of the country from time to time very earnestly, but not very intelligently. We always tried to rest content in the comfortable belief that the Muslim masses clamoured for some political rights and that there was no other problem that immediately confronted them. That erroneous notion led the leaders to tackle the communal problem from the wrong end. The communal problem is at once a political, religious, historical, social and economic one. The political aspect is the least significant. The religious side of the question is given undue importance. Social and economic aspects of the question have been neglected altogether. This neglect of the all-important phase of our life is responsible for the wrong lead given by the League. Why does the cry uttered by the separationists gather strength? It is because the Muslim masses are

swayed by anti-Hindu passions. Again comes the question, " Why is it so ? " My analysis of the problem will not be agreeable to the Hindus, and the fundamentals of my solution cannot be palatable to the Muslim Leaguers, but I boldly claim that my reading of the situation is 80 per cent correct and the remedy suggested by me is hundred per cent right. I know that ultra-nationalists and rank communalists will both give a cold reception to this book. But wide circulation and universal approbation is not my aim. My only object is to educate the moderate elements of all communities in the country as to the real problem that confronts us. Hitler's theory of race superiority may look like a huge joke to us ; but there is a hard rock of grievance behind it. The Versailles Treaty not only pronounced the verdict of political serfdom on the German people, but also economically they were relentlessly robbed and looted. I am sure that you will swoon with horror if you know a quarter of the misery of the German people after the Treaty. The learned author of *The Fool Hath Said* speaks of days " before the Nazi regime, when everybody was for sale, when hunger drove boys and girls to submit themselves to revolting humiliations, when the wildest whim of the most exotic taste could be gratified for the payment of

a few marks." So it was not the slogan of Hitler that worked wonders in the Naziland but the misery of the masses that brought the Germans under his banner. Passions can only be aroused when there is a genuine grievance and a solid demand for redress behind it. Slogans are the outward manifestation of a grievous wrong to a community. Sometimes demands are manifestly exaggerated and the arguments to support them very faulty ; still foolish slogans are more effective than a well-worded sermon, provided there is reasonable cause for complaint. Mr. Jinnah may be manifestly wrong in his arguments, but the very fact that Muslim masses are carried away by the slogan of a separate Muslim nation is conclusive proof of the fact that they bear some genuine grievances which ought to be remedied at once. I admit that passions can be worked up in an unintelligent people for a short period. But the masses cannot be led away by clever people for all times unless there is a real cause for complaint.

The late Lala Lajpat Rai, a very charming and intelligent leader of the Punjab, joining hands with Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, started to rouse the passions of the Hindu community in the year 1926. A Pathan invasion and Muslim dominance in India were their slogans. These

two gentlemen had a long record of service to their country and community. Their forceful communal speeches turned the scales in favour of the Hindu Mahasabha. Congress candidates were completely routed at the polling booth. Most prominent Congressmen forfeited their securities in the General Elections of 1926. Hindu masses sided with Lalaji and Panditji and betrayed the Congress throughout Upper India. When the election fever was over, the Hindu masses regained their lost balance. There was absolutely no danger of a Pathan invasion, and the Hindu masses realized that they had been fooled. Since then they have refused to accept the wrong lead of the Hindu Mahasabha. The Muslim dominance through an Afghan invasion was a mere bogey, and the Hindu masses could not be duped for ever by that false slogan. The result was Mahasabha leaders looked small in the eyes of their own people, and the Congress emerged strong from the conflict. Contrary to that, Muslim capitalist and communalist leaders have always been successful in turning the Muslim masses round their little fingers. Instead of wasting time in finding out the fundamental mistakes in Mr. Jinnah's reasonings I now try to diagnose the malady and prescribe a recipe for it.

I will not argue with those who contend that Muslim masses are more prone to base suggestions than any other community, but I refuse to believe that this state of affairs is the creation of passion only and that Muslims fly at Hindu throats without rhyme or reason. It is just possible that the personal reason may be missing, but surely there are communal reasons for taking each other by the throat. We must either try to appreciate each other's difficulties and resolve to solve them or submit to the inevitable.

II

RELIGION

IT would give the best cause for headache to those who might like to know what is meant by the term nation; but it will be a complacent self-deception to say without an intimate knowledge of Indian life whether Indian people constitute a nation or not. Generally speaking the term is applied to a people who have a common descent, a common language, common history, and a common religion; but to make the term more comprehensive and up-to-date add three more items, *viz.*, common social customs, common political institutions and common economic conditions.

It is admitted on all hands that the majority of the Musalmans in this country are direct descendants of those Aryan invaders who, in the obscurity of prehistoric times, pressing downwards through the north-western passes settled down in India. The descendants of the Mughal, Pathan and Arab invaders are very few. Hence, if untold blessings are inherent in the fact of one nationality and if nationality depends on common blood, then Hindus and Muslims

ought not to lead a cat-and-dog life as they do at present. The long and short of the matter is that prejudices, which are rampant in this country like a mad lion, are not due to racial hatred, and we must search for their causes somewhere else. Is it then the difference of religion that has made us a nation at war with itself? Many will cry ditto to it with unshakable certainty, but I politely refuse to believe it, though that refusal may shake their long-standing belief. It is one of the ironies of history that Islam and Hinduism, in spite of highly tolerant teachings, by a series of accidents should have become unfit for enforcing tolerance on their followers. There is nothing inherently wrong in the teachings of both these religions. They teach us to live in peace and serve one another to the best of our ability. It is not religion but other revolutionary jerks that are responsible for the present state of affairs.

The very fact that Sanatanist Hindus believe in a world-soul called Brahma, who comprehends everything and in whom everything is contained makes the Hindu religion as great as the world-soul. To a Sanatanist Hindu, therefore, this apparent divergence in religious beliefs is the least objectionable. To him this apparent conflict between contrary creeds is a Lila (or

Tamasha) of Bhagwan (God). Everyone is ordained to play his part well on the world theatre without taking anything to heart. In every man who seeks to serve others, he sees the "roop" (manifestation) of Bhagwan and he will call him "devta," the compassionate. Whoever by tact and art rises to fame and position is an incarnation of God. Rama and Krishna, on account of great military feats, are worshipped as God's incarnations. The Vedanta philosophy fully supports and encourages this belief.

The Bhagawatgita or "the Song of the Lord" admits of the realization of truth from diverse points of view. Intolerance is thus rooted out and petty prejudices are washed out from the mind. A Hindu is in fact a gentleman who never inflicts pain on others and who is tender towards everybody. On account of Vedanta philosophy he becomes patient, forbearing and resigned. You can attack Hinduism on other grounds, but no one can deny the fact that, so far as his religious ethics goes, a Hindu does not assign any great importance to one's religious belief for "Mokhsa" or "Nervana" (salvation). You may believe in Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Indra, or you may abuse them. You may believe in the Vedas, or you may criticize the books. Put your faith in Puranas or refuse to

believe in them. In Hinduism it is all the same. Hinduism has absolutely no quarrel with other faiths. On his way to the temple, a Hindu will have no objection to bowing before the tomb of a Muslim saint. He will touch a Ta'zia with reverence. He will not kill an enemy. On the contrary, he will be hospitable enough to offer milk to a serpent that happens to make its appearance in his house. Hindu religion is admittedly a peace-loving religion.

Islam is also the religion of peace. A Muslim is no doubt a soldier of God, but he has to submit himself to His will. The erroneous idea that a soldier cannot be a good peace-maker and lover of peace is responsible for depicting Islam as a militant religion. Islam is rigid only in enforcing certain articles of faith, but for those outside its pale it has no other message but that of good-will and toleration. The rigidity of the private religious duties of the Muslim is looked upon as an act of bigotry by those who do not think like him. Islam has suffered greatly at the hands of those critics who studied it to show up its defects rather than appreciate its beauties.

In Islam race or origin is neither a handicap nor a privilege. It aims at forming a classless society. So its doctrines are best suited to the proletariat. It urges people not to be aggressive.

The Quran says :—

Let there be no compulsion
In religion ; Truth stands out
Clear from error : Whoever
Rejects Evil and believes
In God hath grasped
The most trustworthy
Handhold, that never breaks,
And God heareth
And knoweth all things

As a Muslim you may invite people to the fold of Islam, but you cannot use harsh words, not to speak of forceful conversion. The Book says :—

Invite all to the Way
Of thy Lord with wisdom
And beautiful preaching ;
And argue with them
In ways that are best
And most gracious.

A true Muslim is further forbidden to speak ill of deities and gods of other religions :—

Revile not ye
Those whom they call upon
Besides God ; lest
They out of spite
Revile God
In their ignorance.

After the Quran, Muslims respect the sayings of the Prophet most. It is said that Abdullah son of Omar, a Companion of the Prophet, slaughtered a goat. There was a Jew living in his neighbourhood. He asked his wife whether she had sent a portion of it to the Jewish neighbour or not. She answered in the negative. Abdullah said, " Send him a portion at once, because I have heard from the Prophet that the Angel Gabriel impressed upon him, the Prophet, to do good to the neighbours so insistently that the Prophet sometimes thought that God would send an order to all believers to bequeath their properties to their neighbours also."

It must be borne in mind that in according good treatment to one's neighbour, Islam does not make any distinction between a Muslim and a non-Muslim.

Abu Hurairah, another Companion of the Prophet, said that he had heard from the lips of the Prophet, " He whose neighbours are not immune from his mischief shall not enter Paradise."

The Prophet further said, " You shall not be Musalmans unless you learn to love your neighbours." There is another saying to the same effect, " If you wish that God and His Apostle should love you, then serve your neighbours."

There are hundreds of such sayings, which go

to show that Islam teaches the greatest respect for a neighbour whether Muslim or non-Muslim. The Prophet ordered Muslims to treat a non-Muslim relative kindly and help him in his needs. The faithful are allowed to take a non-Muslim wife and the wife is allowed to retain her religion and social customs.

To do justice in a neutral atmosphere is not difficult, but the real test comes when a man has to do justice to the people who hate him or for whom he has an aversion. Whatever the circumstances, a Muslim is required to abide by the higher moral law. The Book of Islam says :—

O ye who believe !
Stand out firmly
For God, as witnesses
To fair dealings, and let not
The hatred of others
To you make you swerve
To wrong, and depart from
Justice. Be just ! that is
Next to piety : and fear God
For God is well acquainted
With all that you do.

It is clear beyond all doubt that it is not religion but religious insincerity which has made this land the hell on earth. All agitation against religion must cease, because both Hinduism and

Islam teach love and not hatred. Let us with one voice protest against those who in the name of religion do irreligious acts.

I quite agree that the central fact of the teachings of Islam is different from that of Hinduism. According to Islam, God sends down prophets, but does not Himself take any shape or form, whereas the reverse is the case with Hinduism. However, as time passed on, new theories and conclusions were mixed up with the religious beliefs of Islam. Some mystics changed the whole phase of this religion and brought it more into agreement with the Vedanta theory of the Sanatanist Hindus. Puritans may enter the strongest protest against this attempt of the Sufis, but the fact is that in spite of these protests, Sufism is now the accepted religion of 80 per cent of the Muslims in India. The mystic theory of the Sufis is quite in consonance with the Vedanta theory; therefore Musalman masses in religious practices resemble Hindus. If Hindus bow down before an image of a deity, Muslims bow down before the graves of Saints and Pirs. Music and dance are prohibited by Islam, but in every Khanqah you hear sweet music and see elegant dancing. You will further see some of the religious leaders of the masses themselves dancing in ecstasy, and

they are so carried away by the music and dance of the prostitutes that folds of their turbans become loose and they weep and cry like little children. Ordinary prostitutes have taken the place of "Dev Dasis" in the shrines of Muslim Sufis. Music and dance are now as much a part of the Muslim religion as that of the Hindus. The question of music before mosques is absolutely a political stunt. I daily see and hear dance and music before mosques near the shrines of Muslim Saints and Pirs. No one takes objection to it. Whoever dares to protest against it does it at the risk of his life.

If a Muslim of the first century of the Hijra were again sent down to this earth to see the state of religious affairs in India, he would at once say that 80 per cent. Musalmans inhabiting India are "Kafirs," and that they have only adopted the name of "Muslim" to gain their political ends. Otherwise there is absolutely no religious difference between the Hindus and the so-called Muslims. A living Pir and a dead Saint are revered more than a prophet by the ignorant masses. God is dethroned and the prophet is installed instead. Here are some of the poems which are generally recited by musicians and dancing girls at the shrines of great Muslim Saints and Sufis and appreciated by the audience.

الله کے پلے میں وحدت کے سوا کیا ھے
جو کچھ ھمیں لینا ھے لے لینگے محمد سے

Allah has nothing in His skirt except His "Oneness";
We will get whatever we desire from Muhammad.

جو مستوی تھا سر عرش پر خدا ھوکر
اُتر پڑا ھے مدینہ میں مصطفیٰ ھوکر

He who was sitting as God in heaven has come down to Medina in the form of Mustafa, the Prophet.

کل تو مندر میں برھمن کو دیئے تھے درشن
آج مسجد میں مسلمان بنے بیٹھے ھیں

Yesterday you showed your face to the Brahmin in the temple; To-day you appear as a Muslim in the mosque.

محمد سر وحدت ھے کوئی یہ رمز کیا جانے
شریعت میں تو بندہ ھے حقیقت میں خدا جانے

Muhammad is the secret of Oneness. Who is there who can understand this nice point? According to the apparent law of Islam he is a human being, but what he in reality is, is known to God alone.

It is not the Prophet alone who nowadays looks like God to Musalmans, but true to Ved-

anta theory every head of the Mystic Order is looked upon as God in human form.

چاچڑ وانگ مدینے دسے کوٹ مٹھن بیت‌الله
ظاهر دے وچ پیر فریدن باطن دے وچ الله

Chacher (the last resting place of the saint) looks like Medina (the place where the body of the Prophet was interned) and Kot Mithan like Ka'aba. Pir Faridan is a human being in appearance, but in fact he is Allah.

برائے چشم بینا از مدینه بر سر ملتان
بشکل صدر دین خود رحمت‌اللعالمین آمد

For those who have the eye to see (Khan Bahadur) Sadr Din of Multan (a Pir) is the Prophet Muhammad himself who has come from Medina to Multan.

سن کڑے برنگی مولا بن آیا ناسوتی هے
احد تهیں بن احمد آیا ایهه ملنگ بهبهوتی هے

Hear friend, that gay Lord has taken the human form; this "Hermit," who has applied dust to his body, is in fact Ahad (God) but has now come incarnated as Ahmad (the Prophet).

This is a bird's-eye view of the religious convictions that influence the Muslim masses. Such mystic expressions were formerly confined to Khanqahs (monasteries) alone; but in the

mosques the differences were maintained between the Creator and the created. Now mysticism or Vedanta theory has taken possession of the pulpits also. I have seen a band of musicians reciting such allegorical poems and the people dancing round the pulpit of the famous mosque of Shah Muhammad Ghaus outside Delhi Gate, Lahore. The following couplets are inscribed on the inner walls of the Jami Mosque of Garhshankar:

بندہ از بندگی خدا گردد نتواند کہ مصطفیٰ گردد

"By worshipping, the worshipper becomes God; but he cannot become Mustafa (the Prophet.)

قطرہ در آب رفتہ آب شود نتواند کہ در ناب شود

"A drop of water mixing with water becomes water, but cannot become a pearl."

No one can now dare to raise a finger in protest against such sentiments, which are absolutely against the teachings of Islam. Whoever does, he will do so at the risk of his life. The body of the great puritan leader Mujaddid Ahmad of Sirhind who fought his whole life against corrupt ceremonies and practices was buried after death without any tomb on the grave. After three centuries his followers have now taken into their heads to raise a great sepulchral monument over the buried body of their master. The

puritans have always looked down upon those who raise any building over the dead body of any person. Now mysticism has captured the imagination of the Muslim masses, and they are favourably inclined towards Hindu practices. This leaning process towards Hinduism would have been more rapid but for the Arya Samaj propaganda. However, it is clear from the prevalent customs of Musalmans and the rapid growth of Khanqahs that the religious beliefs of Hindus and Muslims are not poles asunder as some people are apt to believe. In spite of Sufism and Vedanta theories being the guiding principle of Muslims and Hindus respectively, their relations are more strained than before. Though Islam in India has absolutely taken the colour of Hinduism, yet the communal disturbances are looked upon as if they were due to religious differences only.

Some of those who cast but a fleeting glance at events, will try to challenge my assertion that the leaning process towards Hinduism would have been more rapid but for the Arya Samaj. It is my firm belief that if Swami Dayanand, the great scholar and well-wisher of the Hindus, had not come to the rescue of Islam, the twenty per cent of puritans that now exist could never have managed to survive. Before the anti-Muslim

preachings of the Samaj leaders the Muslim masses had been absolutely devoid of any religious fervour and they were about to lose their individuality in Hindu society as untouchables. But the virulent Arya Samaj propaganda against Islam whipped some of the Muslim theologians into activity, who took the first opportunity to establish Arabic schools in different parts of the country. They raised the slogan of "down with the Hindu customs" with success. Hindu and Muslim masses for the first time were divided into two different war camps. In politics Muslims leaned definitely towards Britishers. Though they had not much religious fervour left in them, yet they recovered a little from apathy and began to think as a separate entity. I do not deny the fact that the "divide and rule" policy of the Government is also responsible for the present strained relations, but the anti-Hindu passions in Muslim masses were greatly aroused by the ruthless mass attack of the Arya Samaj on Islam. Musalmans of India, though Musalmans in name only, still called themselves Musalmans. The tactless and offensive propaganda of the Samaj through the length and breadth of Upper India called forth strong reaction from the Muslim masses who were unconsciously carried away by the *espirit de corps*. The result was

that the Muslim masses, though they knew little of Islam, became anti-Hindu, and the Hindus also cultivated an anti-Muslim passion in those parts of the country where the Arya Samaj was the strongest.

Those puritans, who entered into defensive war against the Arya Samaj, in their heart of hearts were thankful to the Arya Samaj, because its propaganda afforded them the opportunity of playing the party game with passion and of easily bringing the Muslim masses to their side, if not of religiously reforming them to their satisfaction. The Arya Samaj raised the cry of "Hindus in danger" at a time when Hinduism was gaining a victory over Islam. The political power of the Musalmans was gone and there was no driving force left in them. The Sanatana Dharma being based on Vedanta theory is an ocean-wide religion. Islam like a stream was about to lose its identity in its waters, when the Arya Samaj succeeded in parting the Hindus and the Musalmans in water-tight compartments. The Samajists claim that they had reformed the Hindus and saved them from becoming Muslims or Christians. But what is the Arya Samaj? It is a Hindi edition of Islam, that declared a Crusade against everything that was held sacred by the Hindus. That was its religious aspect. Its

belated attempts to protect Hindus from the onslaughts of Islam had absolutely no spiritual significance. Islam at that time was in a moribund condition, when the great Swami conceived the idea of saving Hindus from becoming Musalmans. It is just possible that the Swami might have seen some people engaged in a futile attempt to take a small bucket of water from the deep ocean of Hindu society; but he failed to see that the stream of Islam was falling into that deep ocean and fast losing its identity. Those who ignore the assimilating power of Hinduism are fools. The Sanatana Dharma apparently looks stupid and unemotional, but it is obstinate beyond comprehension, and therein lies its strength. Hinduism was about to devour the whole of Muslim society as it had devoured Buddhism and Jainism, but the Shuddhi cry of the Samaj made the Musalmans alert. I always appreciate the benevolent attempts of the Arya Samaj in the field of education; but its religious efforts helped the Musalmans to realize their separate entity and made them stubborn in politics. At the same time it de-Hinduised the Hindus more than any other movement. To all intents and purposes the Arya Samaj defeated its own end.

The religious philosophy of the Arya Samaj is akin to the teachings of original Islam. The

Samajists are religiously more aggressive than the Musalmans, so far as disrespect towards Hindu gods and idols is concerned. Mysticism and the Vedanta theory are quite identical, and mysticism is the religion of 80 per cent of the Muslim masses who have drifted a long way from the Islam of Arabia. In spite of these facts there are Hindu-Muslim clashes, but no Sanatanist-Arya disturbances. All these facts go to show that our differences are not religious, but that these strained relations are based on other grounds.

Sikhism, another great movement, ought to be studied in this connection. This movement was essentially a spiritual one and had no political ambitions, but in course of time, on account of a series of incidents, it developed into a political movement and became anti-Muslim in colour and character. As far as its religious philosophy is concerned, it is still a Gurmukhi edition of Islam, believing in one God and despising idolatry and even speaking of the Prophet with respect. Though Sikhs claimed to be a separate community politically and their saints were not immune from the virulent attacks of the Arya Samajists, there was yet hardly any clash between the Hindus and the Sikhs or the Sikhs and the Samajists on so large a scale as between the

Hindus and the Muslims. Though there is a great religious resemblance between Sikhism and Islam, yet there is no love lost between the two in the daily conduct of life. The sympathies of the Sikhs are invariably on the side of the Hindus, and Hindus always side with the Sikhs when any quarrel arises over any matter, social or political.

When I see that in spite of the fact that present day Islam in India is an Arabic version of Sanatana Dharma, and in spite of the fact that Sikhism and Arya Samaj are more or less Gurmukhi and Hindi editions respectively of original Islam, there is animosity between Hindus and Muslims, and the Sikhs and the Samajists always side with the Hindus, I come to the reasonable conclusion that the Hindu-Muslim problem is not a religious one, and that we must find out those causes which are responsible for the present state of affairs in the country.

It is a familiar but fallacious notion that only Sufis are tolerant towards others, and that a puritan Mullah is bigoted beyond redemption. The Mullah is no doubt conservative to the core, but all Mullahs will rise with one accord against those who will be in any way tyrannical towards others. The term Kafir has nothing nauseous in it. The religious scholars have to use this

term to differentiate a Musalman from a non-Muslim. The non-believers or Kafirs may have their retribution in the next world, but as citizens they are at no disadvantage. Islam does not throw Kafirs to the wolves; it rather throws a shield over them. A Mullah can, in fact, afford to be harsh and intolerant towards the Believers, but he has no option but to be kind towards Kafirs. In his own community he is a police officer always to be dreaded; for those outside the pale of Islam he has a message of good-will and peace. It is the cosmopolitan Muslims who depicted him as a frowning demon; in fact he is a smiling deity who always thinks well and wishes good to others, more especially to Kafirs.

I quite realise that a Hindu friend will look askance at me because he has never heard anything favourable and kind about a Mullah, but I have a convincing proof that will change his opinion. The Jamiat-ul-Ulema is a body consisting of religious scholars only. You will always find them fighting on the side of the Congress and explaining away the inconsistencies of Congressmen even at the risk of being dubbed hirelings of the Hindus. Who is Maulana Abul Kalam Azad? A religious scholar of great renown. It is his religiosity that stimulates him not only to take an active part in politics but always to

defend the Congress and Hindu friends from the onslaughts of unkind Muslim critics. There is another Muslim organisation called the Majlis-i-Ahrar. This is a proletarian organization. Its leadership is in the hands of those who are religious-minded people. They are more favourably inclined towards the Hindus and always preach forbearance towards the non-Muslim neighbours. Those Muslim Leagues and societies which have no religious back-ground, not only off and on but constantly kick up a row against the Hindus and the Congress. Are not these facts sufficient to make one revise one's opinion about the Mullahs and exclaim without hesitation that our present differences have nothing to do with religion ?

Take note of another fact. There are two Muslim Universities, one at Aligarh and the other at Deoband. The former imparts secular knowledge and the latter is a centre of religious learning. The mentality of Aligarh students i always pro-British and anti-Hindu, but the mentality of Deoband scholars is anti-British and pro-Congress. The leadership of the Muslim League is in the hands of those who are students of the Aligarh College or English Universities. They have little or no knowledge of Islam as compared with the members of the Jamiat-ul-

Ulema. Had our differences been due to religion, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema and the Majlis-i-Ahrar would have been more vociferous than the League in crying down the Congress and the Hindus. Last but not least, had the present complications had something to do with religion, the Muslims could not have accepted the leadership of Mr. Jinnah, an able lawyer and politician, but admittedly the last Musalman on earth to know anything of Islam.

III

UNTOUCHABILITY

THE meek and unmilitant Hindu who is very broad-minded in religion at once turns round with his tail up if he once enters the social field. He changes colour and begins to show his teeth if you dare to go near him. If a Muslim aristocrat in a princely dress goes to a Hindu confectioner to buy some sweetmeats, he has to stand at a respectable distance or he gets a stern rebuke from the shopkeeper. Dare a Muslim touch the confectioner's hand when giving him the price? No, he has to stretch out his hand with palm up to receive the sweetmeats which will be thrown from some height by the confectioner so that his body may not be polluted by the touch of the Muslim customer. A Hindu is otherwise a thorough gentleman, but his small-mindedness in the social field touches the Muslim community to the quick. I am sure that it is not out of spite that Hindus adopt this attitude. Their attitude towards the Musalmans is the natural corollary of their social system, and they never dream that anybody would take objection to it. There are certain sections of people

in the Muslim community that feel the sting of it and openly say that the Hindus aim at destroying them and will make every attempt to rob them of their self-respect at every step. To those who do not think with me in this respect I say that we differ as to the motive of the Hindus, but I am in no doubt as to the effect on the Muslim community. Self-respect and the sense of pride are no doubt killed in a man who does not resent such treatment. An inferiority complex is developed in those who are so treated. Off and on I try that my sweeper may dine with me, but as a class the Harijans have developed an inferiority complex and they never agree to it unless and until threatened or compelled. Very recently I asked a Harijan convict in this jail to dine with me. On hearing this he ran away and hid himself in the latrine. Two other convicts dragged him out and made him sit on a blanket near me. His hands were washed and I gave him a spoon. He was trembling from head to foot as if he had been suffering from shaking palsy for a long time. I was eating rice and split pulses. He took a spoonful of it and putting it on the palm of his hand, threw it into his mouth, taking care lest the spoon should touch his lips. He dared not sit face to face with me. He turned his back on me with his eyes downcast as if a

Hindu bride in a conservative family sitting in front of her husband was performing a *gauna* ceremony. After taking three or four morsels he fled away again to take shelter in the latrine. To sit at meals with me was a great ordeal for him. He told a friend that five minutes of that evening had been like five years of trial to him. This goes to show how we have taken life out of them and crushed their spirit of self-respect. They cannot now feel a heart-beat for deeper things. They cannot understand the real significance of the struggle for freedom and its true motive force.

Do the Musalmans ill-treat the untouchable out of spite? No, Hindus and Musalmans both quite innocently inflict poisoned stings on our fellow-countrymen, the untouchables. A serpent can take life out of a man, but we kill the man in the untouchable. A lion preys upon the beasts without remorse, so do we treat the untouchables, without compunction for the wrong we commit. Though in our treatment of them the element of ill-will is absent, yet the harm done to them is incalculable. The great heart of our people will not weigh down with grief unless and until God sends down for the untouchables a leader who would courageously revolt against the existing state of affairs and

organise the Harijans so as to knock down those who discriminate unfairly between man and man under the influence of wealth, caste, creed or occupation. He must be a curious creature who dares to call Harijans an integral part of the Indian nationhood. Unless we break sharply with our social system and customs and treat the Harijans as our own kith and kin, we cannot improve our lot as a nation. If the sameness of geographical and political conditions makes a people a nation, then we Indians are a nation no doubt, but the truth of the matter is that we have been divided into factions since 1857 and are ready to subjugate if not to consume one another. Untouchability is the first essential cause of our division and consequently of our weakness. Some optimistic people say that our revolutionary jerk will solve the knotty question. India is too deeply rooted in traditions and will easily weather the storm of any political change. Only a social revolution, which is based essentially on economic justice, can make a real change in the lot of the people. Otherwise, to all intents and purposes, this country will remain a house divided against itself for a long time to come. Islam was the greatest social levelling movement, but it has failed to achieve its end in India, and the Musalmans themselves were absorbed into

the caste system. The old Indian life not only survived the shock of Islam, but it has also withstood the new Western ideas. Indians have not seen a marked change in their social system even since the advent of the British Raj in India. Efforts of a few broad-visioned Hindus failed to bring the desired change in the mentality of the masses.

I am conscious of the fact that there was no constant head-breaking before the arrival of the British people in this country. That was because there was no occasion for that. The Musalmans continued to be treated as untouchables since their first invasion of the soil right up to the Congress régime. Musalmans for a thousand years remained as an army of occupation in a hostile population. This gave them political authority and prestige. The Hindus treated the Musalmans as untouchables and the Musalmans treated them as a subject race. Both were satisfied and comfortable in their own society. The idea of one nation was absolutely absent from their minds. Rajput princes and Mughal emperors co-operated with one another in the field of politics, but the Hindu-Muslim masses even then did not constitute a nation. Akbar, like a great Sufi, enlarged the boundaries of faith. But even that expansion of the realm of religion did not bring

about the desired result. So far as the masses were concerned, politics was the concern of the classes only. Though classes made peace amongst themselves, the masses did not come near each other. Untouchability still divided them into different and hostile camps.

As I have already stated, the Musalmans were not treated as untouchables out of spite but because untouchability had been part of Indian life from time immemorial, and there was no Manu alive to assign the Musalmans to a fifth caste in the Hindu society. Brahma had already given birth to the Brahmans from his mouth, to Kshatriyas from his arms, to Vaisyas from his thighs and to lowly Shudras from his feet. There was no part of the body left that could be allotted to the new class of people. Those who have no class must go to the lowest one, the Shudras; they and the Malechas (Musalmans) were looked upon as people of one class because the Hindus could not think of any other class. The Musalmans did not meddle with the social system of the Hindus and only contented themselves with snatching political power from their hands. After the collapse of the Mughal Empire the Musalmans bowed low before the British people. After the loss of political power and prestige, untouchability remained the chief legacy

of Islam in India. Though Muslims had lived side by side with the Hindus for centuries, their association failed to produce any perceptible fusion between them. After losing the empire the Muslims suddenly felt that they were standing on the lowest rung of the social ladder. The loss of empire was not a material loss to the vast masses of the Muslim community because the history of Islam in India is the history of kings and courtiers, and they had no voice in the administration of the country. However, they lost the doubtful prestige and happiness of being of the same faith with the Emperor.

For some years under Christian rule Muslim masses were quite satisfied with their lot of being untouchables of the Hindus and serfs of the British Government, and in fact there was no energy left in them. The new system of British Government generated a new force in the Hindu intelligentsia, and they imbibed new ideas and thoughts of the West. Although the magnificent edifice of the British administration in India was constructed on the ruins of the despotic Mughal empire, yet it had a democratic background, and the right of citizenship was recognised even for the man in the street. In spite of the fact that every Collector and Deputy Commissioner was a miniature Mughal Emperor in some way, there

was yet a spirit of respect for individual liberty pervading the administration. The Hindu classes welcomed the new era and with the help of large-hearted Englishmen formed a political organisation, the Indian National Congress, to demand more rights in the name of the people. Though this new era was looked upon with suspicion by the religious section of the Muslim community, the classes soon declared their loyalty to the British Crown and the masses only opened their eyes to survey the change. They thought that the fates had played false with them and their case was now hopeless. Through the incessant Congress propaganda Indians, for the first time in history, became conscious of their entity. Muslim masses were still in a dormant condition. The British Government as a counterblast to the Congress claims began to organise loyal Muslims into Megentia of the upper stratum of the Muslim community, and the Arya Samaj exasperated the religious section. Both the vocal sections amongst the Musalmans began to spur the inactive masses. Politics did not interest the Muslim rank and file. "Religion in danger" had also no meaning to them because there was little or no difference between Hindu Dharma and the Islam of India. However, the social treatment of the Hindus made them angry.

Though this treatment was not a new phenomenon, yet this era of individual liberty created a little consciousness in the Muslim masses. They were dormant but not dead. The British efforts in the field of politics and the Arya Samaj activities in the field of religion excited anti-Hindu passions in the Muslim masses. The Muslim intelligentsia and the puritans among the Musalmans played an important part in creating this strong feeling. Musalmans of the Aryan race, Musalmans of the Sufi cult, Musalmans of the High Houses, Musalmans of good education were treated alike as untouchables by the Hindu Society. You may be a *pucca* nationalist and four-square Gandhi-ite yet you will be treated as an untouchable as soon as you announce to a Hindu that you are a Musalman. However justified the Hindus feel and however innocent they plead in their treatment of the Musalmans, in justice they cannot blame the latter if they cultivate an ill-feeling towards them.

I do not insist on a change of heart because the heart of the Hindu is not impure, and a great majority of them treat the Musalmans as such without any ill-feeling. But it can be rightly said that this single practice goes to show to the world that Indians are not one people and that Mr. Jinnah is justified in raising the flag of

separation.

My own little story will convey a lesson and shed light on the subject. While yet a minor, I was sent one day to get some curds from the bazar. In my anxiety to be looked upon as a clever boy I did not buy it from the shop near at hand. I went a little further, hoping that I would get fresh curds, and so deserve the smiles of my mother. In those days there was hardly any Muslim " Halvai " in the whole city of Amritsar. Hindu and Sikh confectioners did not even receive money from the Muslim customer in their hands lest his touch should pollute them. For this purpose they always used a wooden ladle ; the Hindu shopkeeper holding the handle while the Muslim customer was asked to put cash in the bowl. This wooden " doi " was in use because wood is considered a non-conductor, and the Hindu shopkeeper's purity was saved from being destroyed by means of this contrivance. Unfortunately, when putting the price in the bowl of the ladle my wrist touched its edge. The man became a demon and he hurled a thousand filthy abuses at me. For a moment I was stunned and stood motionless and then departed never again to visit a Hindu or Sikh confectioner's shop for the rest of my life. This simple incident that changed the social aspect of

my life took place when there was no political and social agitation in the country, and the Musalmans were used daily to pocket such insults. To my knowledge the first cry of the boycott of Hindu shops was effectively raised in the city of Gujrat (Punjab). The *Paisa Akhbar* was the only weekly organ of the Musalmans in those days. It fanned the flames and the movement spread like fire. It seemed as if the Muslims had been only too eager to receive the message, because the rich and the poor alike had their own sad experiences of Hindu manners. Muslim shops were opened. For any constructive programme economic stability is essential in which the Musalman is lacking. The result was that the bubble burst soon and 90 per cent of the shops were closed down. The age-long traditions have made the Hindus too conservative to change under any pressure. The Hindu leaders have, up to this time, displayed a noble vagueness towards this all-important question. The result is that after the defensive Gujrat boycott movement which was spontaneous, other organised efforts followed in its trail. Some Musalmans in their attempt to save themselves from the social tyranny of the Hindus have unfortunately developed an anti-Hindu mania. The Musalmans have not made any rapid stride but only

separation.

My own little story will convey a lesson and shed light on the subject. While yet a minor, I was sent one day to get some curds from the bazar. In my anxiety to be looked upon as a clever boy I did not buy it from the shop near at hand. I went a little further, hoping that I would get fresh curds, and so deserve the smiles of my mother. In those days there was hardly any Muslim "Halvai" in the whole city of Amritsar. Hindu and Sikh confectioners did not even receive money from the Muslim customer in their hands lest his touch should pollute them. For this purpose they always used a wooden ladle; the Hindu shopkeeper holding the handle while the Muslim customer was asked to put cash in the bowl. This wooden "doi" was in use because wood is considered a non-conductor, and the Hindu shopkeeper's purity was saved from being destroyed by means of this contrivance. Unfortunately, when putting the price in the bowl of the ladle my wrist touched its edge. The man became a demon and he hurled a thousand filthy abuses at me. For a moment I was stunned and stood motionless and then departed never again to visit a Hindu or Sikh confectioner's shop for the rest of my life. This simple incident that changed the social aspect of

my life took place when there was no political and social agitation in the country, and the Musalmans were used daily to pocket such insults. To my knowledge the first cry of the boycott of Hindu shops was effectively raised in the city of Gujrat (Punjab). The *Paisa Akhbar* was the only weekly organ of the Musalmans in those days. It fanned the flames and the movement spread like fire. It seemed as if the Muslims had been only too eager to receive the message, because the rich and the poor alike had their own sad experiences of Hindu manners. Muslim shops were opened. For any constructive programme economic stability is essential in which the Musalman is lacking. The result was that the bubble burst soon and 90 per cent of the shops were closed down. The age-long traditions have made the Hindus too conservative to change under any pressure. The Hindu leaders have, up to this time, displayed a noble vagueness towards this all-important question. The result is that after the defensive Gujrat boycott movement which was spontaneous, other organised efforts followed in its trail. Some Musalmans in their attempt to save themselves from the social tyranny of the Hindus have unfortunately developed an anti-Hindu mania. The Musalmans have not made any rapid stride but only

crawled in the way of removing untouchability. A few Muslim shops are the only advantage that accrued to the Muslims from this agitation, but its repercussions in politics were immensely harmful. Unsophisticated masses cannot make any distinction between social and political affairs. When once their mind is upset, their anger knows no limits. In their rage they even sacrifice their own interests. Here lies the unpopularity of the nationalist leaders. I have heard Sayyid Ata Ullah Shah Bukhari's political lectures. The great speaker carries even the hostile audiences with him. In the ecstasy of the moment the people are so moved that drops of water trickle from their eyes and they jump to their legs in an excited state of feeling. When this forceful orator says: "Freedom is our birthright, Muslims should get it at all costs," the audience in one voice shrieks out "Allah is Great" in approbation. When he says: "But this freedom cannot be attained without Hindu-Muslim unity," the Muslim audience give him a black look. "Unity with those," they say, "who treat us as untouchables is an impossible proposition." In spite of his noble record of sacrifices a nationalist Musalman is always the loser at the polling booth. Why so? Because the noble record in the service of the country's

freedom looks to an ordinary Musalman like loyal service to the Hindu cause. The nationalist Musalman accuses the masses of being inert in politics, and the man of the street accuses the nationalist who wants to lead him to be sacrificed at the altar of a Hindu God—Mahatma Gandhi. I know many a noble soul amongst the Muslims who eagerly joined the forces of freedom but retired broken-hearted because the position of the Muslim masses proved very puzzling. But the key to this puzzle lies in the fact of the social treatment of the Hindu. Early in the Khilafat movement the Musalmans went to jails in large numbers. At least the situation in the Punjab jails was unbearable for Muslim workers who were undergoing their terms of imprisonment in the "C" class. Hindu and Sikh convicts were in charge of the kitchens and a Musalman could not dare to pass the threshold of a kitchen. That was not all. The Musalmans were ordered to stand at a distance. The Hindu and Sikh convict cooks used to throw loaves of bread on their hands. Then the Muslim political workers had to put the iron cups in a row and retire. The non-Muslim cooks never put cooked vegetables or pulses in the cup if it was in the hands of a Muslim, because there was the danger of his polluting touch. But the Hindu

workers in "C" class were an exception to this rule. As a protest against this treatment even some prominent Muslim workers in "C" class had to resort to hunger strike and they were so disgusted that since then "as you have been done by" has been their motto so far as their treatment of the Hindus is concerned.

The immediate effect of this agitation in the Punjab jails was that the Government had to arrange for separate kitchens for Muslims. It is a curious thing that, whenever any social or commercial agitation is started, it always follows or ends in the slogan of "defensive boycott of Hindu shops." This slogan touches the heart of the people more than anything else. The desire that they should not be treated as untouchables by their Hindu compatriots is ever uppermost in the minds of the Muslim masses. The Muslim classes, including the League leaders, always keep aloof from the boycott agitation. They do not act from principle, but they keep aloof because they do not feel the pinch of it. Capitalists, whether Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs, do not observe strict boycott of each other, and Muslim capitalists seldom go for shopping in person and for this reason do not feel as keenly as the Muslim masses. Moreover, they themselves treat their servants as slaves and outcastes. This defensive boycott

of Hindu shops, therefore, is essentially a mass movement. With the awakening of Muslim masses the boycott agitation will gain strength and volume. Unless Hindu leaders bring their influence to bear on the Hindu masses, Hindu-Muslim unity will become a dream. The Muslim masses have little to do with politics. They are not statesmen with an outlook large enough to conceive of the ultimate good of the whole country. They argue in a very simple way. "Here is our Hindu neighbour who feels polluted by the very touch of our hand. What right has he to feel so? If he has such a right, why should we not pay him back in the same coin?" There ends their imagination. I know that a section of the Hindu society wants to see the 'touch-me-not spirit' to continue for ever, because in this way a superiority complex is developed in the Hindus and an inferiority complex is generated in the mind of the Musalmans. This is a short-sighted view of the situation. Though Islam repudiates racial or clannish pride, yet to counteract the Hindu view, Muslims are deliberately introducing a new pride based on a false notion of religion which will be ultimately disastrous to the peace of the country. They are using the Hindu ideology to gain their end. They say that a Hindu is a heathen, therefore

unclean ; his touch will pollute a Muslim who is pure in body and soul. According to Islam all human beings are pure. The religious system of Islam does not rest upon birth, race or class. Yet they cleverly use religion to influence their community because religious hatred is the greatest driving force and therefore an indispensable necessity in this case. Instead of taking up a defensive position and acting upon a constructive programme passions are aroused at once and the boycott movement ends in Hindu-Muslim clashes. As I have already said, their boycott movements are mass movements, without the support of the Muslim capitalists ; therefore they end in failures. Any movement without capital is a body without soul.

A young and smart socialist worker, Sardar Kulbir Singh, brother of the well-known S. Bhagat Singh, when with me in Rawalpindi jail, asked a very pertinent question. " How is it," he asked, " that no sooner does Ahrar influence increase in a locality than Hindu shops are closed down and Muslim shops are opened and the boycott movement gains ground ? "

I answered : " Whenever you educate a community politically, it means that you try to revolutionise the whole mentality of that community. You teach them to study the different

phases of life themselves; in other words you ask them to acquire a new sense of dignity and wish of them that they should become alive to the economic miseries prevailing all around and feel the pain of humiliation. We confine our lectures to economic exploitation and political serfdom of our people by foreigners, and the people become very touchy on these two points. But when they review the situation and study the position in the light of those lectures, they find the Hindu the worse aggressor than the foreigner in this respect. However clean in person and in dress, the Musalman cannot touch a Hindu without defiling him; in some cases even his shadow is pollution for high caste Hindus. Because he has now acquired a new sense of dignity, he feels the pain of humiliation more than he did before. Hence the eruption of the social volcano."

Apparently this explanation carried weight with him, and he seemed to be impressed. Then he said, "The Hindus are themselves in favour of removing this social evil." I told him my impression frankly. "This propaganda against untouchability is a political stunt rather than a change of heart. Hinduism is based on a tortuous arrangement of castes. This complicated structure of society is immovable and unprogres-

sive and will continue to deny regard or dignity for certain castes and classes. The Hindu as an individual is not only harmless but a thorough gentleman. When considered in the terms of caste, he is a steam-roller that moves slowly but steadily to crush everything that comes in its way. Some noble spirits amongst the Hindus no doubt cry hoarse against untouchability, but these noble exceptions have not changed the rule of Hindu society so far as the Musalmans are concerned. If you travel to-day in the guise of a Musalman in India you will become sadder and wiser; then and then only will you be able to grasp the problem that puzzles the nationalist Musalmans and pains the Muslim masses."

Then he related his own adventures in the guise of a Musalman that need not be related because it is the ordinary lot of a Musalman. To inflict grievous hurt and humiliation on fellow human beings is part of the life of a high caste Hindu. It is no part of his programme to create enmities. But his action itself engenders hatred in the hearts of those who are so treated. Here lies the key to the Indian puzzle. The worst part of it is that Hindu parents are still anxious that their sons and daughters should be well up in these six thousand year old superstitions. In this swiftly changing world you can still see

Hindu ladies coming and going to temples making parabolas and hyperbolas on the road to prevent the corner of their garment from touching a Muslim passer-by. Never think, however, that they are devoid of human qualities of being kind and compassionate. On the contrary, they are the very embodiment of those qualities; but agelong exclusive tradition of family and environment of their society have made them the touch-me-nots that they are.

A Sikh friend of mine asked me why the Muslims were becoming touchy day by day on the question of untouchability while their forefathers did not resent that treatment. I asked him a question and that was the proper answer to that interrogation: "Why have Indians begun to demand Swaraj after a century of British rule?" The demand for equality of status is inherent in man. Leaders of the campaign of political emancipation must realise that social emancipation of Musalmans and Shudras is their natural right which cannot be long denied or delayed without prejudicing the country's cause. I further told my Sikh friend how a Hindu lady in my neighbourhood tried to take out sweetmeats from the throat of her minor son who had unfortunately bought them from a Muslim hawker and gulped them down before she could

inform him of the gravity of his action. Several Muslim women were witnessing the scene, and in this age of self-consciousness such acts go a long way to widen the gulf between the communities instead of paving the way for unity.

I have called the Hindu attempts at removing untouchability a political stunt. I will call Muslim zeal for the conversion of Shudras sheer hypocrisy, because Islam does not condemn any occupation. One's being a street sweeper is no handicap according to it. What right has a Muslim to tell a Shudra to embrace Islam before he treats him as a human being? Might he not retort: "Physician! heal thyself. Had you been a true Musalman, you would not have put the condition of conversion precedent to my being treated as a son of the soil. You fly into a fit of rage if I come near you. Still you have the audacity to call me to a religion whose fundamental law is not respected by you."

I know those Musalmans who pose as religious heads, but who have never once in their lives tried to sit with their house scavengers and invited them to dine with them. But on the pulpit you will always hear them condemning the caste system of the Hindus and praising Islam as a great levelling religion. What hypocrisy! To give oneself out what one is not! They speak

like Musalmans no doubt ; but they act as caste-ridden Hindus. If you frankly tell any Muslim religious leader that he is 90 per cent. Hindu in his religious practice, he will incite someone to take your life. Let us not tell the people what is written in the Quran. Let us act according to its dictation. The world will then be eager to follow our religion. Musalmans take great delight in the conversion of big people and always ignore the under-dog.

It is not only Hinduism that condemned all the members of the Shudra class to the miseries of perpetual untouchability. Musalmans have an equal responsibility for it. All moral instincts are crushed in the Shudras. Hindus and Musalmans are equally heartless. For the Shudra there is no God. If there is any, He must be deaf or a partizan of the Hindus and the Musalmans. If He is just and loving, then why have the Shudras been so mercilessly treated and why has He never appeared to help them during the last six thousand years? I find the Musalmans as heartless as the Hindus, if not more, in their treatment of the Shudras. The offer of Shuddhi by Hindus or conversion by Musalmans is not to treat a human being as a human being but to swell their numbers in order that the upper classes of the Musalmans and high caste Hindus

may get political benefit out of them. Hindu Congressmen and nationalist Musalmans cry hoarse to get political rights from the Government, but I see no change of heart so far as the untouchables are concerned. We have learnt to soar high like kites, but we always search for a dead body to feed upon. We use Shudras as a cat's paw. We have not yet begun to think of Shudras as our countrymen and fellow beings. We are only shedding crocodile tears over the lot of the untouchables. We have not yet made up our mind to transform the untouchable into a touchable. We refused to act upon the religion of Islam and to follow the Prophet in this respect. The Musalmans have no message for the untouchables and consequently Islam does not appeal to them. The Musalmans resent the Hindus' treatment of them, but they never for a minute feel for the Shudras whom they themselves treat in the same way. What injury man inflicts on man! No one outside India can comprehend that human nature can be so wicked as it manifests itself in our treatment of the Shudras. Who can imagine the manifold tyrannies endured by humanity here in this country? A great majority of our people have no noble soul in them. How often do we pass by untouchables without offering any help

to them? Have not these lowly-born Shudras human souls in their bodies? Imagine what man has made of man. Why do we resent foreign rule while we daily torture the untouchables and treat them ten times worse than slaves? Ten times worse or twenty thousand times worse than serfs? Let those who do not believe in the essential wickedness of man come over to India and study the facts for themselves. The followers of Muhammad are ahead of the followers of Manu in this respect. We Musalmans have lost every sentiment of sympathy for the down-trodden people. We are as much responsible for keeping down the Shudras as Hindus, if not more. We have also our full share in killing human dignity and self-respect in them and still we boast of professing Islam. What an appalling picture of hypocrisy the Musalman of India is! Against the behests of Islam he takes pride in birth, and even the upper classes of the Indian Musalmans look down upon those who belong to the masses. They have formed an aristocracy of birth but not of mind. They profess Islam but follow Hinduism.

The Shudras as a people are centuries deep in rot. Who will pull them to their feet, wipe their faces and transform them? Once I expected great things from the noble-minded Mahatma

Gandhi, but when he staked his all to deprive them of the right of separate electorate, all hope was dashed to the ground. For one nationhood joint electorate is a necessity; but for those who are treated worse than dogs separate electorate is the only balm that can heal the age-long sore of untouchability. Separate electorate is the device to recognise the right of those who were so grossly wronged. Nothing less than the recognition of separate political rights can save them from their exploitation by their fellow countrymen. They had enough of our love; they must cultivate a spirit of hatred against us, Hindus and Musalmans alike, if they desire to live as human beings. They should not listen to our sweet sermons and good wishes. We have not an iota of sincerity left in us. Is there any place on the face of this earth where human beings are treated with such ignominy? Excepting a few persons, Hindus and Musalmans as a whole are faithfully holding to their traditions. Musalman and Hindu leaders are actuated by political motives only in making friends with them. Beware, it is a snare and a delusion! You Shudras require your full social and political rights; but if you agree to be tied down to the wheel of the Hindus or the Musalmans, you will be doomed for another thousand years.

Leaders of the untouchables should approach this serious problem in a spirit of realism. They should never think that a microscopic minority of Hindu-Muslim leaders will be able in the very near future to break through the formidable wall of orthodoxy. Hindu-Muslim masses are not going to budge an inch from their determined attitude towards you. Leaders of the untouchables yielded under the threat of Mahatma Gandhi. To my mind, both sinned against crores of people who are suffering from the old disgrace and humiliation. The duty of the leaders of the untouchables and their sympathisers is plain. They must blow the breath of life into the nostrils of these down-trodden people by making them realise how their fellow countrymen have treated them. In other words, unless they inculcate the spirit of hatred in their minds against the Hindu-Muslim masses, they will never be able to stand on their feet. Separate electorates afforded them this opportunity. Now under the scheme of joint electorates no untouchable will raise his voice against the treatment meted out to them. They are again thrown on the mercy of those who have never shown any love for them. I am sure the Hindus and the Muslims will curse my reasoning because they belong to the communities of the exploiters. Can temple-

entry movement and inclusion of one or two untouchables as Ministers in the provincial Cabinets change the face of Indian life? It may be called a slight improvement, but it is not a change in the outlook of the people. At this slow pace it will take another thousand years to complete the journey. Only a violent revolt against the existing social order can save the untouchables. Any fraternising effort of the League and the Congress, of Gandhis and Jinnahs will not cure us of our time-honoured habit of looking at untouchables as low people. Any movement based on love cannot dispel pride from a human heart. Hatred is the only known antidote to pride; pride is otherwise an incurable disease. People infected with natural and caste pride cannot be aroused to passionate action. Conscience does not plead the cause of those who are weak and exploited. The wolf is no fit shepherd, and caste Hindus and Musalmans are exploiters; they should not be trusted with the work of uplift. It is a madness to think that Mahatma Gandhi or Mr. Jinnah will transform the old Adam into a new man. The salvation of the untouchables lies in their own awakening, based on the philosophy of hatred for those who are responsible for their miseries. The philosophy of love, self-denial and self-sacrifice is injurious

in the case of those who have been dispossessed for so long, denied every human right and sacrificed for the sons of the high houses and high castes.

What I prescribe for Shudras I cannot prescribe for a Muslim, because he has already learnt the virtue of retaliation and is in a position to hit back. Sometimes he is led to take a mad plunge into destruction and chaos. But Shudras are lying prostrate, too weak to raise a hand in protest. Hatred alone will give them the necessary strength. Those people who are now engaged in an apparently admirable work of uplifting the Shudras are agents of capitalists and high caste people. They only want to lull the untouchables to sleep.

An Ahrar friend Moulana Abdul Qayyum of Cawnpore who is also a convict in this jail informs me that Hindu workers are preaching the philosophy of hatred against the Musalmans amongst the untouchables with the result that the untouchables now treat the Musalmans as untouchables throughout the U. P., Bihar and Orissa. This state of affairs, if true, is a message of hope. The Musalmans amply deserve this treatment. Let the Musalmans be the first to suffer. The Hindus will sooner or later suffer as sure as death the same fate at the hands of

the Shudras. Let us at any cost instil the spirit of hatred in them to awaken them; then the philosophy of love will transform them. But we must restore them to their self-respect by some injection, so that they may feel the indignity hurled on them. If we do so, we will reform ourselves and the Shudras. Then love will reign in the country.

IV

ECONOMY

MUSLIMS do not live within their means and never lay by something for a rainy day. Yes, that is the rule. The economic system of Islam does not permit individuals to put by anything for emergency. Individualism is an unpardonable sin. You amass money at the expense of the poor. That is the economic formula of this religion. Usury is considered a cardinal crime. Islam being a proletarian faith and a classless society, it cannot encourage people to make their pile. Whoever owns any private property owns it on behalf of the State and the State has full right to regulate property as it deems proper. There are certain restrictions against spending money at will. A person holding private property is not allowed to spend even a pie on luxury. Khalid, the greatest general of Islam, was sacked because he gave away ten thousand rupees to a poet. It was held by Caliph Omar that Khalid had given this money either from the treasury or from his own pocket. In the former case he was guilty of misappropriation, and in the latter case he was extravagant. Therefore he deserved dis-

missal on either count. When Khalid submitted his case for revision, the Caliph further confiscated twenty thousand rupees. It was not possible for Caliph Omar to let go one who once was a master with such a large sum of money to be tempted again. The Prophet and his Companions always looked upon wealth in private possession as a great evil. Caliph Omar never hesitated to confiscate the property of those who were thought to be getting fat. The confiscated money did not go into the pocket of any individual; it was spent on the poor. There were ample public funds for the public weal, and Muslim society flourished without wealthy individuals. A classless society cannot flourish when there are other people living according to capitalistic rules of economy side by side with them. Jews and Christians lived with the Musalmans, but they were not allowed to give money to a Musalman on interest and thus upset the economic equilibrium of a classless society.

Here in India the whole economic system of Islam received a set-back. Fate ordained the Muslims to live with a strange people who not only worshipped Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, but were used to treating human beings as impure and untouchable. The law of the land did not give any protection to Musalmans from

exploitation by non-Muslims, while the precepts of religion forbade them to exploit others. The Muslims had to go to the wall as a result. Add to it the one-way flow of the country's wealth due to untouchability. A Hindu will not buy anything from a Muslim shop as far as possible. The Musalman is a permanent customer of the Hindu. Hindus have the sole monopoly of the Indian trade. There exist a few Muslim business-men as an exception to prove the rule.

One will say that it is not due to untouchability that the Musalmans lag behind in trade, but on account of their laziness of mind and extravagance which are responsible for the present state of affairs. I recognise that both the factors are detrimental to the economic life of the Muslims, *viz.*, their own extravagance and the treatment of the Hindus. Englishmen, though nicknamed a nation of shopkeepers, could not compete with Hindu shopkeepers because of their sporting habits. How can a nation of spendthrifts like the Musalmans live among such careful people as the Hindus without losing its all some day ? Englishmen like the Hindus will patronize a British firm first and will go to a Hindu or Muslim firm last. The Musalmans did not create such racial prejudices in their minds with the result that they were forced to make

way for the Hindus in the economic life of the country. Very recently, in consequence of a little political and religious awakening, a section of the Musalmans have come to the conclusion that unless they develop the same prejudices as the Hindus have developed, they will not be able to stand on their legs. They incessantly preach the social boycott of the Hindus just as the latter have boycotted them. Some of these preachers do realize that a change for the better is coming over the Hindu society, but they maintain that this change is so slow that it will not be effective even after centuries, and Musalmans will grow weaker and weaker day by day. They have no faith in the reformatory intentions of the Congress. The Muslim masses are willing to put their faith in Socialism, but they find little or no response to this movement in the Hindu society. In the new social order the Musalmans still hope to be treated as equals ; but so long as the old order continues their lot cannot improve. Go to any Muslim shop and you will seldom see a Hindu customer, but the Hindu shops are still crowded by Muslim customers. " Buy Muslim " slogan is still weak, because it is a movement uncontrolled and unorganised. But feelings against the Hindus are always there. A curious phenomenon. Muslims hate Hindus and the

Hindus continue their hate-inspiring treatment ; still the Musalmans flock to Hindu shops. This shows that any boycott movement, unless skilfully organised and made a part of religion, is bound to fail. We had enough experience of it in the boycott movement of the Congress. Every Indian knew the disastrous effect of the import of foreign goods on national economy and easily took the pledge to "Buy Indian," when the boycott movement was at its zenith. After some months enthusiasm cooled down and in spite of genuine feeling to the contrary people again began to buy foreign goods. In spite of great resentment against the treatment of Hindus, Muslim customers still flock to Hindu shops in large numbers. I say, the Hindus do not shun Muslim shops from spite but because it is their habit of life not to visit a Muslim shop. Since I do not buy sweetmeats, milk, bread and the like from those Hindus who treat me as an untouchable, it has become my habit not to buy anything from a Hindu shop. I do not hate any Hindu, but my steps seldom turn towards a Hindu shop. Though the Hindus treat Muslims as untouchables only in so far as cooked articles are concerned, yet they have now developed a subconsciousness which leads them to Hindu shops only. If they go to a Muslim shop, they do so with

effort. Here lies the secret of the economic ruin of the Muslim community. I am at one with those who say that Musalmans earn with difficulty and spend with less care, and that they have a natural dislike for keeping accounts. But their incompetence in money matters combined with the prohibition of usury is not sufficient to put them on the mercy of the money-lenders. The fact of his being an untouchable goes a long way to destroy a business in which the Musalman invests money because he cannot command the patronage of the Hindu public. It is not a fancy but a fact that 70 per cent Musalmans still go to Hindu shops and but only 5 per cent Hindus care to visit a Muslim shop. Muslims as a community are hard pressed and have been going through deep waters for some decades. Hindus make it a point that no Musalman should be able to hire a shop in a Hindu bazaar. Hindus and Musalmans lived in different quarters, and in order to make themselves more safe the Hindus have of late erected big doors with iron bars, so that a Muslim hawker cannot enter a Hindu quarter. I shall add insult to injury if I asked any untouchable, " Why do you not do any business ? " No Hindu and no Muslim will patronize his shop, and members of his own community have not yet acquired the communal

spirit sufficiently strong to make them "buy from the untouchables"; therefore there is no hope of untouchables buying from untouchables only. Hence there is not the slightest chance of an untouchable's flourishing as a trader. The case of the Musalmans comes next to that of the untouchables. Hindus consider Muslims as untouchables; therefore the latter have little chance of success in any business. This is why it is generally felt by shrewd Muslims that unless Muslims develop the same prejudices as the Hindus have done, their future in India is gloomy. The pulpit does not help them because Islam forbids its followers to treat any people as unclean and untouchable. Mosques are the only fit places for such propaganda, but the Mulla finds himself helpless in this respect. Muslim theologians have not considered this question as a body. So the "Buy Muslim" movement is only a mass movement in the sense that masses feel the pinch of the Hindu movement, but there is no leader to put any constructive programme before them in order that they may be saved from the daily humiliation. An aggrieved community, which finds no peaceful way of giving vent to its feelings, generally resorts to violence. Music before mosques and taking out processions of cows meant to be slaughtered on the Bakra-Id day

is nothing but an eruption of pent-up feelings. If you diligently go through the history of communal troubles and their causes, you will come to the same conclusions as I have done. The Muslim masses, before the advent of British Raj, were inert, while the ruling class stood high above the Hindus. So there were no communal troubles. Hindu masses consider Englishmen to be as untouchable as the Musalmans. But no Englishman has any ill-feeling against the Hindus, because the Hindus of high houses who go to them dare not put them to humiliation. They dine with them and invite them to their own tables. But when the present order collapses and Englishmen have to live here as Indians, not as rulers, they would feel the pinch of untouchability. The Muslim ruling classes did not feel it in the Mughal times. Even to-day they do not feel it in the same measure as the common people do because the capitalist class amongst the Hindus does not properly observe the rules of Hindu society. But Muslim classes have only now begun to realize the plight of the Muslim masses on account of the Hindu untouchability. British officers felt the need of studying the question of peasant indebtedness. They brought prominently to light the growing poverty of the Muslim masses and in their own novel way tried to help them. They did not bring the

untouchability question into prominence from fear of the Hindus. The British Government wanted to drag the Shudras out of the clutches of the Hindus, but Mahatma Gandhi threatened to fast unto death. Government fearing the political consequences of such a fast let down the Shudras. Untouchability is the worst form of slavery. All credit is due to the high soul of Manu who has left the sons of the soil to live not as separate nations but as enemies engaged in an unending war. To-day, when I was writing this, I received the *Tribune* of 27th May, 1940, which contained a very recent article by Mahatma Gandhi published in the *Harijan*. I give it below in order to show that what I have written is not an exaggerated view of the situation :—

Bombay, May 25

" I have no hesitation whatsoever in saying that he who has the slightest untouchability in him is wholly unfit for enrolment in the Satyagraha Sena. I regard untouchability as the root cause of our downfall and Hindu-Muslim discord. Untouchability is the curse of Hinduism and therefore of India. The taint is so pervasive that it haunts man even after he has changed over to another faith," writes Mahatma Gandhi in to-day's *Harijan* in answer to a correspondent's question, whether Gandhiji does not agree that

it ought to be made an absolute rule in the Satyagraha camps that no one who regards the touch of Harijans as polluting and does not freely mix with them should be permitted to attend them.

Replying to another question whether it will not prove a short cut to the removal of untouchability if the Congress started a plan to train Harijans as expert cooks for Hindu homes and made it a rule to man every ashram or mess meant for the Congress with Harijan cooks thus trained, Gandhiji writes, " Our ambition should be to enable the Harijan to rise to the highest rank, but while that must be the ideal it would be a good thing to train some Harijans to become accomplished cooks. I have observed that more we draw them into the domestic service the quicker is the pace of reform. Harijans who become absorbed in our homes lose all sense of inferiority and become a living link between other Harijans and Savarna Hindus. "

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the great leader of India has come to the right conclusion at last. But nothing has yet been done to show that Congress leaders will take up the matter earnestly. Mahatma Gandhi devotes his whole time and energy to removing the taint of untouchability from the Shudras, but makes only a passing reference to the treatment the

Hindus meted out to the Musalmans, which shows to an ordinary man as if Mahatmaji has no heart in removing the stigma of untouchability from the Musalmans, whereas the Musalmans deserve the same amount of attention as the Shudras. Mahatmaji must know that an attempt is being made to embrace the Shudras with a view to using them against the Musalmans. The Musalmans have no right to blame the Hindu leader of nationalist India because he is surrounded by those luminaries who are more interested in the Shudras than the Muslims ; and the Musalmans have made no serious attempt to deserve his attention. Some Muslims call Mahatmaji a shrewd little bania who has only sweet words for the Musalmans and in his heart of hearts likes to see them as under-dogs of the Hindus. This is an uncharitable construction of the working of the Mahatma's mind. We Musalmans never put our social problem before him, never sought his advice, and in fact never patiently heard him. He is after all a human being capable of being influenced by his environment. As long as the big brothers Maulanas Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali were with Gandhiji, he thought more in terms of a Musalman than of a Hindu. The fates ordained otherwise. The Mahatma, who was in the pocket of the Ali Brothers, has been thrown

into the lap of those who naturally think in terms of Hindus. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is a scholar. Scholars are always shy and incapable of influencing those with whom they come in touch. They think it below their dignity to talk freely with anybody and assert their own point of view. So the Musalmans are out of court so far as the Mahatma is concerned. Moreover, efforts of one man, however great, cannot be crowned with success when the problem to be tackled is so puzzling. Hindu society is always desirous, of excluding others. Reform in such an essentially exclusive society is not an easy matter. Here in the Punjab there is a national institution called the Servants of the Punjab Society controlled by first class Hindu patriots of the province. They, firstly, never admitted any Musalman to that society, because as a people Hindus are brought up in an exclusive atmosphere and they feel a certain amount of uneasiness in Muslim society: secondly the donors are Hindus and if they dare to admit any Musalman they will lose the support of Hindu philanthropists. There is an Insurance Company managed by highly patriotic persons, but they seldom employ a Musalman. So mere verbal generosity of outlook cannot solve practical difficulties. Moreover, if Gandhiji does not himself realise this and some-

one urges upon him the desirability of propaganda against Hindu exclusiveness in the economic field, do you think any Hindu will hear him? No, this is expecting too much of them.

In short, Hindus not only shut out the Musalmans from their social circles, but also treat them likewise in business. On the other hand, a bania in a Muslim village still lives like a lord, wielding authority and having prestige, but in the villages of Hindu Jats he is looked down upon and in the villages of Sikhs he is harrassed. Musalmans were never considered fit for benevolent treatment even at the hands of banias. This exclusiveness of the Hindu in the field of economics has made the position of the Musalmans very pitiable and has left no potentiality in the rank and file to work out a constructive programme. Now, Muslim masses have become very touchy on account of poverty and can be easily excited to fly at a Hindu's throat. They have had to pay very dearly for their madness. They kill Hindus but are hanged proportionately in larger numbers and bring calamity to a still greater number of their dependents. I invite your attention to a very recent public appeal made by the Secretary of the Sind Muslim League with regard to the pressing need of monetary help for those who were arrested in connection with the

(Manzilgah) Sukkur riots. The appeal reads as follows :—

" There are altogether 1,800 Musalmans who are being prosecuted in different cases. Those who are shut in the four walls of jails have left behind them starving families, women and children, who have no clothes to wear. Up to this time several Musalmans have been given capital sentences and some others were given long terms of imprisonment. I appeal to all Musalmans in the name of those starving women and children to send as much help as they can. "

As a visitor of the Punjab jails I was informed of many cases of the Muslim rioters with very long sentences, whose women and children were starving, and there was none to look after them. The Muslim masses are poverty-stricken and unorganised. Classes are careless and callous. In spite of all those miseries, Muslim masses will continue to be furious and riotus because they are treated as aliens in their own country. Our first need is that Hindus should take upon themselves the duty of forming a strong organisation to combat those who consider Musalmans as untouchables. If a Muslim organisation takes up this duty, it will further embitter the feelings. In the year 1925 the Ahrar workers, who then formed the Punjab Khilafat Committee, took to prea-

ching against the treatment of the Hindus. The Hindus resented such preaching. The Government threatened to take action against those who were in any way connected with this agitation. This taint of untouchability is to be removed somehow or other from the Muslims. If the Hindus condemn their co-religionists, it will pave the way to Hindu-Muslim unity. When the Sewa Samiti was formed, the Musalmans were glad and hoped that this organisation would help them by raising its voice against the Hindu treatment of the Muslims. But to their utter dismay and disappointment this organisation devised new instruments of humiliating the Musalmans. The Sewa Samiti volunteers offered water to Hindus in glasses, while for thirsty Musalmans and scavangers they used a hollow bamboo pipe. They pour in water at one end of the pipe and it comes out at the other end. By this contrivance Hindu volunteers are protected from the polluting touch of the Musalmans and Shudras. They give water and take away self-respect. This service resulted in more hatred. In spite of a bamboo being a non-conductor, if the hand of an impure Musalman touched the pipe in the course of gulping down the water, he was taken to task. Such pipes are generally used for pouring down country medicines into the throats of cows and

buffaloes in our villages. Forty years ago no Muslim was employed as a water-carrier at railway stations throughout India. Even Muslims of high houses were subjected to humiliation by Hindu watermen. The Musalmans have now compelled the railway authorities to make separate watering arrangements for them. The cry of ' Hindu water ' and ' Muslim water ' may be heard at any station at the arrival and departure of every train. This is a standing contradiction of the one-nation theory. If there is any true nationalist amongst the Hindus, it is his duty to encourage in protest all silent voices amongst the Musalmans whose brains are not yet deadened and who loathe the treatment meted out to them by the Hindus. If Hindus encourage Musalmans, there will be peace and goodwill in the country. If the Musalmans are left to themselves to remedy this state of affairs, there will be chaos and confusion in India. Everybody will admit that the present state of affairs should not be long allowed to continue. Some Hindu organisation should come forward with the sole object of preaching for better social treatment of the Musalmans. On account of the humiliating social treatment by the Hindus I see Musalmans journeying into a new life. This would be the end of our political aspirations. The Musalmans are

very hard pressed by the social and economic boycott of the Hindus, and they are going through deep waters to-day. As a counter move they are developing the boycott spirit in them. It is no easy matter to boycott those who are financially stronger and the task is beset with difficulties. But they have become desperate. They are already left to fry in summer and freeze in winter, and the social treatment of their Hindu fellow countrymen is still very exasperating. A gifted orator like Ata Ullah Shah Bukhari could not rouse Muslims to patriotic action because they see that in spite of the fact that the same mother India bears them and nourishes them, they are considered untouchables by those who expect them to shed their blood for the common cause. So a Muslim thinks that his home is the earth and the world is his fatherland, political problems of India are outside his sphere and he has no right to approach them in the light of one nationhood, until the social and economic tangle has been straightened out.

V

LANGUAGE

A COMMON LANGUAGE is the first ingredient of a nation. In this respect we are very unfortunate. There are dozens of languages in this country. Hindus and Muslims break one another's heads over the rival claims of Hindi and Urdu. Our spoken language in Upper India is Hindustani, which is understandable to every inhabitant of that part of the country ; but the written language is Persianised Urdu or Sanskritised Hindi. A great battle is raging round thi question, which tends to widen the gulf between the two communities more and more. The beauty of a language consists in spoken and written languages being one and the same, but the hysteric attempt to make Hindustani look like Persian or Sanskrit is making the question of language a rather difficult one. Urdu as its name indicates was an honest attempt on the part of both the Hindus and the Musalmans to evolve a common language for the whole people of this country. Urdu assimilated all the appropriate words of Sanskrit, Persian, Punjabi, Arabic and English. As the communal struggle went on

unabated, the Hindus naturally wanted Hindi to be made the medium of instruction. In the Moghul period Persian was the court language. In the British Raj, Persian yielded place to the English and Urdu languages. Musalmans still think that they evolved Urdu as a common language and that the Hindus' claim about Hindi is only a spoke in the wheel. Hindus feel that it is their natural right to popularise Hindi. So they close with each other and broken heads are the result. Sometime before the partition of Bengal, the Bihar Government raised the question of Urdu and Hindi. The action of the Bihar Government preyed on the minds of the Musalmans. After the partition of Bengal, agitation in favour of Punjabi was started in the Punjab as a medium of instruction. Hindus took sides against Urdu, and from their attitude the Muslims concluded that they were paying off old scores. The Muslims laid great stress on the adoption of Urdu as a *lingua franca* for the whole country; the more they stressed the claims of Urdu, the more the Hindus resented it, and in a few years the Hindus discarded Urdu and began to popularise Hindi with a vengeance. Hindus with vast financial resources at their disposal enriched the Hindi literature within a few years. In the natural course,

though Urdu is still the popularly spoken language, Hindi as the written language has stolen a march over Urdu and Urdu is now lagging behind Hindi because of Hindu capitalists and politicians. Congress Governments and the film industry have given an impetus to it. Musalmans who follow the policy of " spend and God will send " are left to mourn like a poor passenger who cannot afford to buy a ticket for an outgoing train and sets out on foot to reach the destination. Young Muslim authors who express themselves in Urdu do not lack qualities of head and heart, but cannot make a living, and they are soon fed up with this thankless task. Munshi Prem Chand, a great story writer, is an outstanding example of this. He began to write in Urdu. In spite of being highly popular he could not make both ends meet. But when he began to write in Hindi, he was well off in a few years. The most popular book in Urdu sells in hundreds only, but a Hindi book sells in thousands because the Hindu public can afford to purchase books, while the Musalmans generally borrow books or make use of libraries. A poverty-stricken community, however gay, cannot produce good literature; because literature is the result of long and patient study of a subject, and that cannot be done without encouragement and patronage. There are so

many Urdu writers. Every subject they touch turns into a story, but poverty reduces them to skeletons for their fault of being Urdu writers.

It is a silly attempt to thrust Urdu on Hindu citizens. They do not care for it. They have every right to cultivate the language they love. Poor peoples always have poor literatures; the rich cannot be made to cast off their own rich literature. There are certain Muslims who accept the two-nation theory and still expect the Hindus to adopt the Urdu language. The Congress attempt to make Hindustani the *lingua franca* of India should be welcomed by the Musalmans, but it must be clearly understood that this Hindustani will naturally be Sanskritised Hindustani. Musalmans are no doubt lovers of high literature, but on economic and political grounds they cannot make Urdu a popular language. I know that Hindu politicians wish from the core of their heart to settle the language question once for all, but it is a very intricate question and cannot be settled in a decade. Too much insistence on Urdu is the outcome of a social disease. Musalmans and Hindus live in watertight compartments. Therefore they cannot be expected satisfactorily to evolve a common language unless and until their social relations are improved. Urdu was built on the ruins of Persian and Arabic with

united Hindu-Muslim efforts. But very soon it became the language of the untouchables and unworthy of Hindu use. Hence any attempt to make Urdu a *lingua franca* would be futile. Hindi is also the language of Kafirs and a believer would not learn it. Every Hindu and Musalman should try to know both scripts, Hindi and Urdu. This does not mean that we will be thus able to evolve a common language soon. Continuous suggestion by marching and drilling leads a regiment to a rigid uniformity of action ; common language leads to a rigid uniformity of a nation in its thinking. But this uniformity of thought and action is essentially based on social and political unity which is absent in the case of India. A German who reads the French language does not begin to think as a Frenchman, because their politics are different. We Hindus and Musalmans not only have our respective historic backgrounds different ; even socially we consider each other untouchables. So every rule becomes an exception in our case, and the situation becomes puzzling. Our social prejudices not only make our politics complicated, but also they make our whole life a hell. They make the question of a *lingua franca* for the whole of India a knotty problem. No one is willing to yield ; therefore no satisfactory solution is possible.

Every attempt to evolve a common language will be met with opposition because we are living as enemies. Those who wish well for the country and want peace can only help this cause by learning both scripts. In my weak condition of health and old age I have learnt to read Hindi Primary Readers. Though I like the Urdu language very much, a peep into Hindi is also delightful.

There is another complication—that of the provincial languages. Though Punjabi is not understood even in the whole of the province, yet its claim to be the medium of instruction is put forward by the Sikh community. Urdu is in fact polished Punjabi, but Sikhs have no love for Urdu. They do not like even Hindi. They have evolved a script of their own out of Hindi. So there are not only dialects of one language, but languages within languages in this country. One language could be a factor in keeping all the people of India together, but our responsible leaders fall out daily on this question. All honest attempts of the Congress leaders to solve the question of language have failed. Unless the malady of untouchability is removed and people begin to live like brothers, they will not be able to evolve a common language. Hindu masses are very obstinate in things that give them a semblance of superiority over the Muslim

masses. While there is a section of Hindu politicians who are eager to see Hindus and Muslims living as brothers, there is another section that works day and night for the continuance of the old order. I had occasion to visit the office of a Hindu Trust one day. While waiting for the manager, I saw a library adjacent to the office, where some gentlemen were reading newspapers and some others were taking notes from certain books. Instead of waiting outside I thought it better to read some papers in the library. No sooner had I entered the room than all eyes were turned on me. They looked astonished and perplexed. Almost all of them who were reading or writing ceased to do their work and began to look at my face and the faces of one another. It at once flashed across my mind that I was not wanted there ; but why ? Suddenly I saw boards hanging on every wall with inscriptions in bold letters: FOR HINDUS ONLY. I am told that it was the life mission of the Hindu philanthropists to keep the superiority complex of the Hindus intact. This Trust is perhaps the biggest in India. With such training in exclusiveness still going on, no one can hope to solve the language question overnight. Let us wait and see how Almighty God orders our destiny after this world war.

VI

POLITICS

HINDUS are socially intolerant, but politically their leaders are far-sighted and broad-minded. They are a little hesitating no doubt, but not incorrigible and unprogressive. They will give a patient hearing to every proposal and will try to find a way out of the difficulty. Politically they are quite sincere and try their level best to act as nationalists. They only deviate under the great pressure of their masses ; otherwise in the natural course of things they are prepared to go to great lengths to oblige the Muslim community. There would have been more breaking of heads than hitherto, but the sufferings endured by these Hindus for the country's cause have melted the hearts of even those Musalmans who have a natural abhorence of the Hindus because of their unbearable social behaviour. These Hindu leaders attracted the noblest amongst the Muslims. The flower of the Hindu and Muslim communities in the Congress organisation have suffered much in their attempt to blend the two peoples into one nation. But their efforts have not so far been crowned with success. Why

Because they did not proceed with the country's problem scientifically.

The Lucknow Pact of 1916 is a proof, if any proof is needed, of the fact that Hindu leaders of their own accord conceded separate electorates and thus bridged the gulf that had sprung on the formation of the Muslim League. This move on the part of Hindu leaders brought the Hindus and Muslims of the upper classes closer to each other. Though Hindus and Muslims are still separate peoples, yet it showed that they can sit together and speak with one voice. It added to the prestige of the country.

Hindus of the Mahasabha mentality believe that separate electorates are the root cause of the present strife, but even before that Pact we were living as alien peoples always ready to fly at each other's throats. We have yet to produce that resourceful man who will be able to fuse various prejudices into one creative drive. Politics is the art of doing what is possible under the circumstances to the best of one's ability. I recognise the nobility of soul of the Congress leaders who never gave way to despair and doggedly tried to find ways and means to adjust all quarrels.

As a natural corollary to the new reforms the Musalmans wanted to make up their deficiency

in different services, but it was resented by the Hindu educated community who held the monopoly of some of the services. Since the year 1922 every Government office became the propaganda centre for broadcasting the message of hatred. The Hindu Press and the Muslim Press bitterly attacked each other. There were riots and breaking of heads. Hindus and Musalmans who had come nearer to each other began once more to take leave of each other as if for ever. Congress leadership was alarmed. Mr. Das, the great leader of Bengal, notified his intention to allot 60 per cent of the public services to Muslims in those districts and Municipal Boards where they were in majority. He actually raised the percentage of Musalman employees in the Calcutta Corporation. Mahasabha leaders raised a storm of protest against him, but he steered his ship through this storm until his valuable life was cut short by heart trouble. Mr. Sirinavasa Iyengar, President of the Congress in 1926, together with other Hindu leaders, thought that the cause of Hindu-Muslim trouble was political. Hence he wanted to know what could be the Muslim demands in the case of Purna Swaraj. Muslim leaders including the late Maulana Muhammad Ali and Mr. Jinnah met at Delhi and formulated very moderate proposals to be included in the

Hindu-Muslim pact. They demanded reservations of seats according to population based on joint electorates. It is curious that even this proportion did not find favour with some of the Hindu Sabha leaders, and consideration of it was postponed. A unity conference was called a year later to further discuss the matter.

At a number of these conferences I saw that Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah tried his level best to come to an agreement with the Hindus, but his efforts were not crowned with success because of a Hindu gentleman of renown who was afterwards taken as a member of the Congress Working Committee. Mr. Jinnah from the very beginning of his political career was a staunch supporter of joint electorate and a great advocate of one-nation theory. But that Hindu gentleman left no stone unturned to exasperate Mr. Jinnah in the unity conference. The Muslim League was split into two parts. One section led by Mr. Jinnah and supported by the late Maulana Muhammad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Dr. Ansari and other nationalist leaders held a Muslim League session in Calcutta, and the other section led by Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain and Mian Sir Muhammad Shafi held its session at Lahore. The former had the good wishes of the Hindu leaders and the latter had the backing of the British Gov-

ernment. One advocated joint electorates and the other demanded rights on the basis of separate electorates. Congress leaders were very anxious to offer a common front against British Imperialism. In their anxiety to do so they called an All-Party Conference to be held at Lucknow to consider a new pact on the basis of the Nehru Report. Muslim politicians were anxious to secure the support of Hindus for the separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency. Hindusabha leaders opposed the proposal tooth and nail, but the Congress spokesmen of Sind brought to light strange facts which go to show that our political policies change with the wind. A Hindu Congressman informed the conference that a few years before the Hindu communists had demanded the separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency and the Muslim communists had opposed the proposal. But the position was now reversed. This is how prejudice works. Congress leaders were satisfied that there was no fundamental difference between the claims of the different communities. The Nehru Report tried its best to dissipate the fears of the Musalmans. The case of the Punjab always presented a difficulty because of the triangular nature of the problem in that province. The Hindus and Sikhs want a greater share than is justified by their num-

erical strength in services and Municipal Boards and the Legislative Assembly, and the Muslims desire to retain their bare majority ; hence an adjustment becomes impossible. In the conference every province was eager to adjust its differences in the best spirit, but the Punjab was making a very poor show of its talents and tolerance. At last in a sub-committee which was attended by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Pt. Moti Lal, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Maulana Azad, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Lala Lajpat Rai and others, the warring elements of the Punjab were made to accept joint electorates. The Sikhs were the first to declare their acceptance. The Muslims willy-nilly acceded to the wishes of the leaders. However, the Congress, Khilafat and Akali workers signed the Punjab Pact. But to our astonishment, that very day the Sikhs began to show their misgivings, the next day they mildly protested and the day after they clamoured against the Pact. It added more to our astonishment when we saw the whole Hindu Press supporting the Sikhs. The Sikhs have always let themselves be used as pawns in all political games of the Hindu communalists and even some Congress Hindus have a soft heart for the Sikhs. Both Mahatmaji and Pandit Malviyaji supported the Sikhs in their protest against the

Punjab Pact. The Sikhs now demanded that their seats should be fixed according to population and they should be further allowed to contest any number of seats in the Punjab under the scheme of joint electorates. The Musalmans had but a bare majority in the province; they could not be a party to this arrangement; moreover, joint electorates were never favoured by the Muslim masses. Those amongst the Muslims who signed the Punjab Pact became the target of fierce attacks by Muslim communalists. Khilafat workers who were the signatories of the Pact were in very deep waters in those days. But they continued propaganda in favour of the original Punjab Pact. But the Congress withdrew the Nehru Report and the Punjab Pact *ipso facto* went with it. It must be noted that Mr. Jinnah, who favoured joint electorates, wanted some minor changes in the Nehru Report, but Mahatmaji did not yield. However, after the Nehru Report had been thrown into the river Ravi, the Khilafatist Musalmans continued to favour joint electorates, but it had not been imagined even by the most imaginative among them, that Dr. Ansari in his Faridpore speech would make overtures to the Sikhs on the basis of their new claim. But the Muslim nationalist workers did not find their backs equal to this

burden, and they gave way forming a new organisation called the Majlis-i-Ahrar. Hindu leaders did not lose heart and continued their search for a common formula satisfactory to all. Mahatma Gandhi joined the Round Table Conference and the Muslims were ready to accept the joint electorates, but the Sikhs again confused the issue by making extravagant claims. Mahatma Gandhi as the sole representative of the Congress had not the courage to rebuke the Sikhs for their immoderate demands. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald was asked to give an award on the claims of different communities. Unfortunately, the award of the British Premier was a bolt from the blue for non-Muslim politicians, and the Sikhs threatened bloodshed. Another unity conference was called, but it also ended in smoke. It may again be noted that Mr. Jinnah was dropped out of the picture in the Second Round Table Conference because he was a staunch supporter of one nationhood and an advocate of joint electorates. Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain was a shrewd politician. News-mongers said that he was responsible for the great mischief done to the country's cause. He was a moderate leader, therefore a practical man. Communities and peoples, he used to say, " seldom relinquish the advantage over other communities and peoples; hence there is the

necessity of hard fight for our rights in this country." After the Communal Award he was quite satisfied. Now he was anxious to come to terms with the Hindus and the Sikhs on the basis of joint electorates. He and Sir Joginder Singh agreed to a formula based on joint electorates, but both the Sikh and the Hindu leaders turned it down. When we accepted the Punjab Pact on the basis of joint electorates, he said, our scheme of joint electorates was not disastrous for Muslims, but he feared that Hindus and Sikhs would oppose us tooth and nail. Perhaps knowing this weakness of the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab he himself evolved a formula based on joint electorates to be finally rejected by the latter. He was sure as the sun in the heavens that Punjab Hindus and Sikhs feared that they would be worse off under the scheme of joint electorates and therefore were not going to accept it easily. However, under the Communal Award the Musalmans were given more than they expected and Mian Fazl-i-Husain was in a position to show magnanimity towards other communities, though only outwardly. Multan jail barracks were full of provincial and district office-bearers of the Congress and the Ahrar when one morning the news of the Award came in. Musalmans were jubilant while Hindus felt

blue. Outside, the Sikhs threatened bloodshed in the province and took oaths before Guru Granth Sahib to revolt against the Communal Award. But the Congress High Command kept its head cool and did not try to disturb the communal peace. The Congress accepted the Award as the last resort because there was no way out of it. The Congress accepted the Ministries under the Award and the long-headed Congress Governments did their level best to hold the scales of justice even in trying circumstances. Human agencies are not without fault, but the defects of Congress Ministries were allowed to obscure their good features. At one time the League spokesmen and press made much of the police firing on Khaksars in the United Provinces. Even a reasonable person amongst the Muslim community pulled a very long face because of this incident, and the League M.L.A.'s set their faces against Pandit Pant, the U. P. Premier. The Muslim masses were made to believe that by suppression of the Khaksars, the Congress wanted to break the spirit of resistance in the Muslim community. A Khaksar day was celebrated. Muslim papers brought out "Khaksar Numbers." Now Sir Sikandar's Government in this province has felt compelled to do the same thing with a vengeance. Firings and

prosecutions are of daily occurrence. The League is quietly looking at the bloody drama. No one can now dare say that the Unionist Government with a Muslim League at its head is breaking the backbone of the community. The protest of the Muslim press, if it ever protests at all, sounds like an appeal which falls on deaf ears. You will tremble at the thought of this state of affairs if a similar Khaksar massacre had taken place anywhere under a Congress Government. The Khaksars had a good time in U. P. jails. They were treated as if they were state prisoners. But now in the Punjab jails they are being treated as ordinary criminals, and batches of them are tendering apologies.

In spite of the Communal Award, the League leaders now demand the partition of India into two parts. They are dead sure of the support of the Muslim masses in any extravagant claim. The Muslim masss will be ever ready to support the League with their lives because as neighbours they are not satisfied with Hindu dealings. As a money-lender the Hindu treats his Muslim client harshly, and as a fellow countryman he considers him unclean. Hence Muslim masses want perpetual strife with the Hindus. They cannot appreciate any generous move on the part of the Congress leaders. They look through coloured spectacles

on every move of the Hindu politicians because in daily life they do not find an iota of generosity in any Hindu. Yes! they want revenge for their day-to-day treatment by the Hindus. They look upon him as their saviour, who goads them to continue the strife and they look down upon the prince of peace as a traitor to the cause of the community. "Towards animals in distress," they say, "Hindus are willing to extend their helping hand, but for a human being in distress, if he is a Muslim, they have little pity."

Being treated as unclean is becoming unbearable to the Muslims. Once a people begin to feel the indignity, they can be goaded by clever persons into any fanatical act. There lies the secret of a communalist's success and failure of those who preach Hindu-Muslim unity. The voices that were silent before are now encouraged; Muslims are now learning the art of speaking as they feel it. One of the ultra-nationalist Muslim workers confined in this jail said that enemies are not so badly treated by civilized nations as Musalmans are in this country. Here are some German aliens confined in this jail. Our Superintendent, a British Military Officer, does not mind dining with them. But we who live in one country and are a subject race, treat one another worse than enemies.

This state of affairs ought to set every Congressman thinking. But the Congress programme is naive if not primitive. They formed mass-contact committees—lifeless bodies. They defeated their end very soon because the Hindu fears Muslim contact, while the Congress is mum on this subject and does not try to purge prejudices from the Hindu mind. The Congress has an Achhut Adhar programme, but it has no reference to the treatment of the Musalmans by the Hindus. At least I have not heard any Congressman condemning the Hindus for their treatment of the Musalmans. Their four-anna membership is no contact with the Muslim masses. If Hindu members of the Congress are ordered by Gandhiji to dine with Musalmans, I am sure 95 per cent of them will leave the Congress. What do they mean by Muslim mass contact, when the very touch of a Muslim Congressman pollutes his brother Hindu Congressman? Mass contact looks like hypocrisy, mere deceit and a fraud.

A Hindu young friend who is serving his term with us told me of his experience which points to a moral. He with other Congress workers went to the villages to enroll members and address meetings. Musalmans as usual gave the cold shoulder to them. Feeling thirsty he enter-

ed a Muslim house where an old lady was sitting. She asked him who he was. He replied that he was a Brahman. "Hindus never use anything touched by Muslims," she said. "Mother, I am not one of those. I stand for unity," he said. "You will succeed. in your mission, those who treat Muslims as untouchables cannot," said I.

Every Hindu patriot who wishes well to the country should himself study this subject. I assure them all that when Muslim masses see a Muslim nationalist fighting shoulder to shoulder with a Hindu nationalist, they at once jump to the conclusion that this man betrayed Islam for a mess of pottage for himself.

Hindus stand arraigned before the tribunal of history and humanity for treading upon the necks of their own fellow countrymen. The defiling power of a dog or a lizard is not so great as that of a Musalman or a Shudra. Some Hindus, I am glad, are paying some attention to the uplift of the untouchables other than Musalmans, because Mahasabha politicians want numerical preponderance to fight constitutional battles and, if need be, to array them against the Musalmans. But without a change of heart they will not be helpful to the Shudras and will never be immune from danger. Caste prejudices are the offspring of blind stupidity which is incapable of recognis-

ing the dignity of man. If once it is recognised, India will become a haven of peace. Will Congress politicians muster sufficient courage to fight on the side of the Musalmans in eradicating the evil of untouchability? Sometimes I fall a prey to misgivings even about Congress friends when I see them crying hoarse against the treatment of Shudras and never speaking a word against treatment the Hindus mete out to the Musalmans. Are they not inwardly feeling proud of this treatment? Do they not want to continue this state of affairs? I console myself with the idea that the political awakening of the Muslims will come to their help. Then what about the theory of one nationhood in India? One nationhood is a stunt of a few politicians; it has no significance so far as the Hindus and the Musalmans are concerned. Some say that a generation is springing up which will soon revolutionise the mentality of the people and blend them into one nation. I say amen to it, but I am not very optimistic. New times will not come soon. An age-long disease cannot be eradicated in a decade or two. There are still people in the Congress fold who justify untouchability. They say it is hygienic. I have seen some prominent men connected with the Congress holding the glass of water high in the air and turning their faces to the sky they stand

with open mouths, pour water into their mouths and gulp it down the throats in a very artistic way. Yes, it is hygienic, they say. It is maniacal, say I. Judge for yourself who is right. I have been with Malviyaji in Delhi Jail. He was kind and considerate, but awfully tough as a Brahman. Let alone a Musalman, he would not like to see even the shadow of a Hindu in his dining place. President Patel was a very jolly fellow. He knew the weakness of Panditji and used to visit him just at the time of his meals. Patel used to stand before the sun in such a position that his shadow was cast on Malviyaji. This otherwise sane Brahman would jump out of the *chauka* like an enraged child. What is the matter, Panditji? President Patel would ask.

How suffocating is the atmosphere of the Hindu society for a Musalman! No Hindu can dream of it. Unless we lay low the demon of untouchability, India, the paradise on earth, will continue to be a hell on account of communal strife. We must cease to employ the language of hypocrisy and frankly admit that so long as untouchability lives, Hindus and Muslims cannot cultivate any social ties. I know that an attempt is being made to make chattels of the Musalmans, and uplift the Shudras only, and then dominate India. Unfortunately some Hindus have reached

that stage in emotional stress when logical arguments cease to sway decisions. But I am sure better sense will prevail some day in the country, though that day seems very remote. I as a Musalman gratefully appreciate the enthusiasm of Congress politicians to come to an understanding with the Muslims. But no political move will be crowned with success unless the social ban is lifted from the Musalmans. As I have already stated, Muslims badly feel the pinch of untouchability and social boycott by the Hindus. They will embrace every opportunity to pick up a quarrel with the Hindus because life is not after their heart on account of the treatment meted out to them. Mr. Jinnah is the apple of their eyes so long as he promises to fight against those who have kept them down. No sooner does he come to terms with the Hindus, than he will be cried down as a traitor. The secret of leadership of the Muslim masses lies in goading them to constant strife with the Hindus. A life of poverty and ill-treatment at the hands of the Hindus has made them desperate. They want to answer back insult for insult. Who does not know that poverty and ill-treatment belittle the mind and corrupt the spirit? The Musalmans think that Hindus are responsible for their woes. This is why they one day extol a

man to the skies but the next day, when they find him amicably disposed towards the Hindus, they despise him.

VII

THREE NATIONS

1.

A touch-me-not spirit pervades the atmosphere of this country. Nationalism cannot survive in this climate. A needle in a haystack can be found, but elements of nationalism cannot be traced in the Indian masses. It seems that it is the common chain of slavery that binds them together; otherwise there is no moral force to keep them united. One can well insinuate that Mr. Jinnah and I are of the same coin and do not wish this country and its people well. Please yourself and think as you like; but truth is truth and must be told so that realities may awaken the politicians to the danger facing the country. Our salvation does not lie in the theory of one nationhood or two. Why do we eulogize nationalism? It is as much a curse as communalism. Both nationalism and communalism dwarf the mind, and make us bigots and blind. Lust for dominance and sense of superiority are the offsprings of nationalism. Nationhood goes before and pride follows after it. What is this untouchability

and this caste system? This pride lifted to the level of religious fanaticism. "My country, my community, my caste, right or wrong" are the products of a narrow civilization which has led to the present world war. This modern departmentalism must end in smoke. But I don't want to make internationalism a cloak for inaction or a shield to be thrown over foreign dominations. Charity must begin at home, but it does not mean that I must conspire against a remote neighbour or try to cultivate a superiority complex in relation to the people who happen to be nearby. Nationalism has dragged weak nations into the mire of humiliation. This exaggerated spirit of nationalism is responsible for untouchability in India. Nationalist Germany is astride a mountain of skulls and bones. The more I ponder on the treatment of Shudras, the more I am convinced that of all the sinners the Hindu is the chief. The Musalman comes next. We Ahrars are not fighting for nationalism but for internationalism. In us is awakened a conscience which feels a responsibility for poverty and misfortune not of the Indian people alone but of humanity as a whole. Communalism, Nationalism and Caste System are names of social and political diseases; they can only be remedied by sympathy; we have to do the duty that lies nearest to us. Hence we

are mainly devoted to the political emancipation of the Indian people. I don't think that Indians are one people; still I feel called upon to serve Hindus and Muslims alike, because they are my neighbours and living under the same political conditions. But for Shudras I have great mercy and sympathy. Don't try to convince me that the Indian people are one nation. Nationalism is departmentalism; nevertheless it denotes a wider group of people thinking alike and living like brothers. But in India virulent individualism in fact rules the day. Everybody wishes to treat others as under-dogs. There is no ordered system of ideas. There is no national pride but caste prejudices. Still people have the audacity to say that the Indians are one nation. Mere geographical conditions do not constitute a nation. There are three nations in India: the pure—Hindus; the impure—Shudras and midway between them stand Muslims. A noble fear of seeming unpatriotic makes some hesitate to speak their whole mind on the subject. It is no doubt realised by all who have the capacity to weigh facts and form a sound judgment on the present situation that there are not two but three nations in India—Hindus, Musalmans and Shudras. It is no good burking the fact that age-old prejudices cannot be shaken off in a few years. The day of one nation-

hood may one day dawn on India, but we have no right to expect its dawn soon because we have not made any serious attempt to attain social unity. Social unity is a condition precedent to national harmony. Should we pray for a violent revolution that may destroy the present social structure of India and bury the time old prejudices for ever? Here lies our salvation; otherwise by evolutionary method success cannot be achieved even within a reasonable period and we will continue to be divided in three separate groups—Hindus, Musalmans and Shudras. This prayed for revolution must necessarily be based on economic justice; otherwise the rich will continue to have the upper hand and turn the poor round their fingers as usual.

If social and economic reform is to make progress at a snail's pace as at present, then it must be noted that India's ills are not due to religion but due to the touch-me-not spirit of a great section of the Indian people. The present religion professed by the common Musalman is not the religion of the Prophet but is that religion which was evolved by Emperor Akbar in consultation with his Hindu advisers. In essence and spirit it is Sanatan Dharma, the only difference being that in the case of Muslims, sentiment centres round the Prophet, and Hindus devote

their prayers to Rama and Krishna. Some Hindu friends wrongly imagine that Musalmans are essentially a religious community and are influenced by religious people more than other communities. On the contrary, I see that Hindu masses are led by religious people. The Mahasabha section is led by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviyaji and the Congress section by Mahatma Gandhi ; both the gentlemen are essentially religious. There must be something wrong in his upper storey who thinks that Mr. Jinnah is a religious man. So religion has no hold on Muslims. They are bigoted against Hindus not from any religious motive but on account of their social and economic boycott by the Hindus, which has laid them prostrate.

2.

If the Indian people do not form one nationhood, they lose nothing if they learn to live peacefully. In fact they would gain everything. Different history, different social customs, even different languages should not mar our progress. I know that caste prejudices and untouchability are not to be remedied soon, but their catastrophic consequences can be avoided. If the Musalmans, instead of expecting every Hindu to

treat them as his social equals, inculcate the spirit of responsive co-operation in their community, the situation will be eased within a few years. Instead of boycotting the Hindus as a community and treating them as unclean, they should try to pay back only the arrogant Hindus in the same coins. The Musalmans should not refuse to dine with those who do not treat them as untouchables. This will have a wholesome effect on the relations of both the communities. The number of those who believe in interdining will steadily increase and the Musalmans will have a hope for the future and their dignity will be saved for the present. I know some of our Hindu brethren instead of being ashamed of their behaviour towards the Musalmans, will dub them as bigots and communalists ; but we must patiently endure it. These defensive tactics will not disturb the peace of the country. It must be clearly borne in mind that we are adopting a line of expediency in order to be immune from the evil effects of untouchability. For Shudras I venture to prescribe the same medicine. But they are half-dead. We Hindus and Muslims have taken the life out of them. I have already advised them to take bold steps, but to whom is my advice directed ? To the Shudras. We have crushed their soul so much that they are now unable to hate and take

revenge. By granting them separate electorates the British Government wanted to resurrect them though to serve their own ends, but fates decided otherwise. Poor people will not be able to stand on their own legs for a long time to come without the aid of some friendly people, and that aid will not come soon, I am sure. Both the Hindus and the Musalmans are still stiff against them. The Musalmans, I am sorry to say, feel their own shoe when it pinches and do not feel the tight boot of Shudras. Poverty is hard but untouchability is horrible. We along with the Hindus have made their lot hard and horrible. How keen and impatient the Musalmans are to remove the taint of untouchability from themselves, but they are not half as earnest to remove this taint from the Shudras. If Muslims do not mind being bracketed with the Shudras, I would advise them to make common cause with them. We should first extend a helping hand towards the Shudras and embark on a scheme o responsive co-operation with the Hindus, so that we may be able to live in peace in this country. Unless the Hindu society cultivates the international spirit, in other words, the humanitarian spirit, the Musalmans and the Shudras must take a defensive line of action in order to be safe from the effects of untouchability. No doubt, politically all the

peoples of India have to sink or swim together; but the Hindus have given free rein to their prejudices and claim not only a mental or moral superiority over others but consider others as unclean and impure. A politician is one who is a past master in the art of delay. Indian politicians are unwilling to take up in right earnest the cause of those who are considered untouchables. A man who possesses feelings naturally fires up at seeing the treatment meted out to the Musalmans by the Hindus, and to Shudras both by the Hindus and the Musalmans. Let not the quiet submission of the Musalmans and the Shudras give consent to untouchability. The communities affected should leave no stone unturned to change their lot as soon as possible. All people are the architects of their own fortunes. We must tell frankly those who ill-treat others that the cup of patience has run over. Mend yourselves or we ourselves will end untouchability by resorting to responsive co-operation. It must be clearly borne in mind that social uplift cannot be attained by the missionary effort of Congress leaders only: untouchables should also exert themselves to get out of this situation. Unless all peoples in India attain equal social status, their political future will remain gloomy. It is part of patriotism to resort

to non-violent non-co-operation with those who think themselves high born and look upon others as untouchables. As soon as they come to their senses and relinquish their arrogance, it will be our duty to lift the ban from them at once. The Musalmans are in a position to start this responsive co-operation with the Hindus. They will become very strong in a few years' time and they will never find reason to fight with the Hindus, as at present. Their present strife is absolutely social and economic and not religious or political. It is therefore right to remove the disease by starting responsive co-operation. That is to say by dining with those who have no objection to dine with you, but refusing to take any eatable from the hands of those who consider you unclean. All political struggles end in Hindu-Muslim riots, because Hindus and Muslims are not socially united. They will become friends in a short space of time, provided the Musalmans act upon my advice or the Hindus banish the idea of treating others as untouchables. Responsive co-operation is an easy affair, but it is too much to expect of the Hindus that they would soon give up that habit which has become their second nature.

Untouchability is a utilitarian superstition. This cast of thought is very valuable for those

who practise it. It dries up the main artery of economic prosperity of those who are considered unclean. The touchables will seldom buy anything from those who are considered untouchables. Hence they condemn them to economic stagnation by refusing to trade with them. The prejudices of the high caste Hindus seem to have been well-weighed and rationalised. They never question whether ghee has been touched by a Musalman or a Shudra. Milk, so long as it is not boiled, is pure even to the Hindu, if it has been touched by a Shudra. So there is method in their madness. Ingenuity of the touchables was ever on the strain to find ways and means of keeping down others without causing much inconvenience to themselves. By treating others as untouchables material advantages of the Hindus increased with the passing of time; even the Musalmans were hard put to it to keep themselves on a level with them. Unless the Musalmans and the Shudras devise some method of combating the evil ingenuity and the utilitarian prejudices of the Hindus, they will go to the dogs. Responsive co-operation is the only effective weapon to combat those who refuse to treat fellow human beings as their equals. In a few years the Musalmans have made marked progress in the field of politics; but they still have much

to do to make up leeway in the economic field. I cannot advise Muslims to cultivate love of money. They should try to create a new world order based on economic justice. By bettering the lot of all the people in India we can better our own lot. Muslim young men should at once join those bodies that aim at a better social order. If the Musalmans gird up their loins and at once start responsive co-operation and also make up their minds to join hands with those who want to change the old economic order by peaceful methods, then and only then peace will reign in the country and this earth will become a heaven for us all. Hindus are not a bad people. They are peace-loving and gentle. If once they are forced to give up the superstition of untouchability, they are sure to prove good neighbours. This certificate to the Hindus will lash some of the Muslims to fury, who think that the Hindu is incapable of giving up narrow prejudices, and who further believe that their interests cannot be safe in the keeping of those whose gains consist in the percentage of our losses and who have themselves held off all these years from cultivating our friendship. I am not a pessimist. I still believe that the old world order will yield place to a new one. The social outlook of the Hindus will naturally widen, but we must also do our part to

bring that day nearer. The popularity of the Pakistan scheme rests mainly on the Hindus' treatment of the Musalmans. If once the Hindu is reformed, no one will hear of Pakistan in this country.

There are certain Ulema who take exception to the Pakistan scheme because they think it would narrow down their field of activity as missionaries. Muslims will hesitate to attach much value to it because up to this time their missionary zeal has been zero ; not one percent of them treated their house sweepers as human beings, not to speak of delivering the message of Islam through the length and breadth of the country. The Musalmans openly declare that all their woes are the dark fruit of untouchability practised by the Hindus and unfair dealings of the cunning money-lenders who belong to the same class. They are willing to play even into the hands of foreign imperialists if they are given the hope of security against these sufferings. British imperialism is not so bad as the humiliating treatment by our fellow countrymen. Hindus may laugh at this unpatriotic idea. But untouchability is a direct negation of patriotism. Those of our fellow countrymen who have no feeling, no emotion outside their job of money-making, cannot appreciate the point of view of the poor Muslims.

Those good-hearted Muslim theologians who put forward the plea of the propagation of Islam against the Pakistan scheme seem to belong to the upper strata of society and consequently fail to feel the pulse of the masses who suffer daily indignities at the hands of the Hindus. If the Muslim League is not merely shaking the tree in the hope of making some fine fruit fall and the Hindus continue the same attitude towards the Musalmans, then Pakistan may be considered an accomplished fact. There is now no escape from it unless there is change of heart among the high caste Hindus or the leaders of the Muslim League lose heart.

There are some other well meaning gentlemen in the Muslim community who feel that the Pakistan scheme is financially unsound. To maintain Government with a deficit budget is an impossible proposition. But if the top-heavy services are dispensed with and there is a will to work, there is no country in the world whose finances are insufficient to carry on the simple machinery of its Government. If the conditions under which a community is made to live are suffocating, it is but natural that it will leave no stone unturned to find a breathing space regardless of other inconveniences. Life is not worth living under humiliating conditions. Musalmans

will naturally choose to rule in the hell of Pakistan than to be serfs in the heaven of Hindustan.

Under a unitary system of Government and with the present social and economic order, Musalmans will surely sink soon to the depth of the Shudras. If the present social and economic order is to continue, then the Pakistan scheme will serve the purpose of the Musalmans better than a unitary form of Government. When discussing the scheme embodied in the Nehru Report, I, on behalf of those friends who now form the Ahrar group, made it clear in the general meeting of the All-Parties Conference held at Lucknow, that the scheme of Government embodied in the Report would not serve the best interests of the country, because it would raise grave doubts in the minds of the Musalmans as to their political future in this land, the Musalmans did not attach any importance to my line of argument at the time and Hindu politicians turned down my proposition of federated provinces. In a subcontinent like India only a system of federation can work well. Provincial autonomy has now preceded the formation of a responsible Government at the Centre. The Musalmans may now claim that less residuary powers be given to the Centre. The inauguration of provincial autonomy has given a natural right to the provin-

ces to break off at will from the rest of India. So, under a real federal scheme, Musalmans will practically be living in a Pakistan. It will be up to the Musalmans to decide whether they wish to live in Hindustan or to insist on a separate home for themselves.

To live in Pakistan or Federated Hindustan will make no difference to the Muslims. If they choose to live in federated India they will do so for their own benefit. If their life is uncomfortable there, they will naturally seek to sever connection with Hindu India. Hence from the national as well as from the communal point of view, the cry of Pakistan is ill-advised and ill-timed. We must get our freedom first and try for some time honestly to make up differences and effect a social and economic revolution. Every ounce of energy should be spent on making the Indian people a classless society. After Swaraj, the Muslims will not tolerate to live for a moment as untouchables. Social degradation is more pinching than slavery. After Swaraj which will be the natural outcome of the war, the Musalmans will become more desperate. Once politically free, they will resent this social treatment with double the vigour and energy. Once a community becomes conscious of its humiliation, it grows more and more vociferous as time passes.

Every Hindu and every nationalist Musalman should know that the Muslim community is becoming ever more conscious day by day of the degrading social treatment they receive at the hands of the Hindus. Though the Pakistan scheme is not without its dangers, the Musalmans want to get further away from their Hindu neighbours because they feel uncomfortable in the society of those who have not yet learned to treat their fellow countrymen as their equals. Federation of the autonomous provinces with less residuary powers at the Centre can best serve the purpose of the Musalmans. If the social treatment of the Hindus becomes as desired, the Musalmans may be persuaded to give more and more powers to the Centre. But if, following the lead of the Hindu Mahasabha, Hindus take it into their heads to become more and more intransigent in their dealings with the Musalmans, then the Pakistan movement will gather strength.

Mr. Sirinavasa Iyenger, an ex-President of the Congress, is one of those well-meaning gentlemen who are still under the impression that the Hindu-Muslim problem is one of a political nature. Once the Musalmans are satisfied on the political issue, both the communities will learn to live amicably together. He has gone so far as to suggest that the Muslims should be given half the

share of the Central Government. I humbly suggest that the Hindu-Muslim question is not one of political nature but has a social and economic basis. Economically serfs and socially humiliated, no community can be satisfied even if some of its members are raised to the most exalted positions. Even the masses will demand of them at once to make laws for social levelling and economic justice. If present social and economic conditions are to continue, strife and struggle will go on unabated. Political rights without social and economic justice are meaningless. A larger share at the Centre and more independence in the provinces must accompany a complete change of heart on the the part of the Hindu public. Otherwise more political power to the Muslims will bring them nearer to the Hindus only for fighting at closer quarters.

There is always a cry that Islam is in danger. The man in the street who does not appreciate fully the teachings of religion feels himself called upon to make sacrifices for the sake of Islam. The East India Company foreseeing the danger proclaimed their intention of administering the personal law of the Muslims and the Hindus through their own Qazis and Judges. It is necessary to make it known to the Muslim public that under the Swaraj Government they will have

their own Qazis to administer their personal law as in the time of the East India Company. The leaders of the Ahrar Party invited the attention of other parties in the country to this demand. I know that the upper strata of the Muslim community is not in favour of this demand because they do not want their property to be administered in accordance with the law of Islam. It may be noted that Congress leaders are not against this demand, but the vocal section of the Muslim community is not enthusiastic about it; so nothing could be done in this respect after the Karachi Congress, which assured respect for their personal law to all communities.

In short, if the Muslims get their proper share at the Centre, more power is given to the provinces and the personal law of the Muslims is administered through Qazis, the Muslims will be as secure in Hindustan as they would be in Pakistan, provided the Governments in provinces and at the Centre are based on social and economic justice. Social tyranny and economic boycott ought to be considered cardinal sins in the country; otherwise Muslim public opinion would continue to clamour for Pakistan where they hope to live in peace and freedom.

The exponents of the Pakistan scheme contemplate letting the Hindus and the Sikhs live

side by side with them as at present. The Hindus and the Sikhs with their present prejudices of untouchability will continue to make the Pakistan an Achhutistan. Then perhaps the Musalmans will think of embarking on a new scheme of transfer of populations. This cannot be done unless we try to carry things with a high hand. Who can dare to think that transfer of populations will be an easy matter? Is the present leadership of the Muslim League strong enough and self-sacrificing enough to force this issue? The Muslim League has always presented itself to me as a political club of idlers and parasites. They have not yet dreamt of the horrors that will follow the Pakistan scheme. They sit satisfied, with their heads full of castles in the air. They honestly hope that the British Government will make Pakistan a comfortable home for them. Gain without pain is the hope of those who live in a fool's paradise. Unless the Musalmans make up their minds to face the perils the scheme will necessarily bring with it, their vain fancies will bear no fruit. But I offer a more practical proposition. Federated India with less powers at the Centre will be a full "Dominion Status" for the Musalmans. They can break off their connection with Hindu India at any time if they find that their life has been made intolerable under

the Federal Government. To contemplate the vivisection of India at this stage is urging the community to extreme measures without a corresponding gain.

How long shall we live a cat-and-dog life in India ? I am glad to note that Mahatma Gandhi has wisely declared that the Pakistan scheme is no calamity. If we cannot live with each other like good neighbours, let us part as friends and live a peaceful life in our respective homes. To the Muslims I say, " Why should we put off the day of our salvation by discussing the utopian scheme of Pakistan which has no practical value unless and until we throw off the foreign yoke ? "

VIII

CONCLUSION

THE Old world order is dying. You will hear of it no more. Every cloud has a silver lining. The war in Europe is sure to yield good results for humanity as a whole. We must look to the future with hope. The world revolution will not but revolutionise the mentality of the Indian people. Though we are eaten up from within and are weakened, we may yet hope to emerge stronger from this world conflict. We can recreate India which may be a great asset for mankind. I am not halting between two opinions and am frankly of the view that Hindus and Musalmans do constitute two separate nations at present. Still I hope that once we manage to rise from beneath the foreign heel, India may be able to lead the world to peace and prosperity.

There are some Muslims who feel that Hindus cannot be gained over on any terms and therefore they do not wish to try the chance. They think that vivisection of India is the only remedy. Through their social and economic boycott by the Hindus the Musalmans are cast adrift upon the world without resources. Those Musalmans

who speak in this strain should realise that Government service has become the be-all and end-all of us all. We do not try to rely on our own selves and wish to bask in the sun of official patronage. The Muslim was the soldier of God. He was the born leader of nations. But now the spirit of pleasure prevails over the spirit of sacrifice. They have forgotten that those who adhere to truth at all cost and sacrifice their all for the good of the people will soon find the promised land where all they sacrificed is restored to them. Will the Musalmans listen to the call of duty with the air of a man who is borne down with disappointments? Islam teaches that one should never despair and against all miseries the Muslim's spirit should bear up unbroken. I have said frankly that the present atmosphere is suffocating for the Musalmans. It will require Herculean efforts to build a separate social and economic structure for the Muslim community in India, and I have suggested the remedy. The truth is that too great a faith has been placed by all political organisations in political advance and too little has been done to mould the present to ensure future social harmony. The signs of the times are ominous. The intelligence of the Muslim must perceive the danger ahead. A happy quiet life after their own heart is possible only after

struggle. You have to pull to its feet a nation which has been deep in rot for centuries, that ought to be done courageously and cautiously. With the unshakable certainty of a dreamer we have to carry out our scheme of social and economic revolution, but we must not declare war on Hindu society. We have every right to cure our society of Hindu-made sufferings, but at the same time we must take care not to create bad blood between the communities. The Hindu is demonstrably wrong in treating the Musalman as an untouchable, but the Musalman should not behave like a man beside himself. We have to convince the Hindu that we are not satisfied with his behaviour, and at the same time we have to give proof of our good intentions by our own conduct. We must learn to live the life of true Muslims who are the friends of all and enemies of none, ever ready to offer a helping hand to all who need their help. Social service to all alike should be our proud badge of distinction. We have still to do a great deal to banish fear and doubt from the hearts of our Hindu neighbours who are always suspicious of our political designs. Tell them frankly that the Pakistan scheme is gaining impetus because of their treatment of the Musalman, but never hesitate to serve your Hindu

fellow countrymen. You must know in your heart of hearts that the Pakistan scheme is the offspring of a defeatist mentality and can be our last resort if we fail to change the hearts of the Hindus. Otherwise the best course for us is to become leaders of the Indian people not by dint of brute force but through service and sacrifice. Show your Islamic character by treating all people kindly. Refuse to be treated as untouchables, but at the same time make up your minds to treat the Shudras as human beings. Lip-sympathy and mere generosity of outlook will not do any good to the Shudras. We must lay low the demon of untouchability and set them free from its clutches. Obliterate all prejudices of the past. Know that God is angry with us because we are also responsible for the present inhuman treatment of our fellow human beings. Let us go down on our knees and ask pardon of the Shudra for our past conduct and beg Almighty God to help us in treating the lowly born people as equal partners in a new social order. For the ill-treatment of our fellow countrymen we have been punished with foreign domination. We must turn over a new leaf, mend our ways and learn to live with our neighbours, especially the Shudras, as brothers. Then and then alone will a new era dawn upon us. We have lost Hindustan,

we will lose even Pakistan, if we do not say good-bye to our slave mentality and become the true soldiers of Islam.

Brothers in faith! The majority of the Musalmans live in Pakistan already. We have our majority provinces. We are nine crores in number, but have not the strength to live the life of true Musalmans. We should abhor the idea of subjugating nations, but we must try to maintain our superiority over others through high morals, great sacrifices and continued service. We are not to exploit others but to win over the hearts of peoples by kindness and service. Aspire only to become leaders of the people, never covet to lay hands on the crowns of kings, or look greedily to the wealth of the nations. Distribute wealth equally, treat Muslims and non-Muslims justly. We have to lead the world to prosperity and peace; therefore we must make our character sublime. We have to lift up humanity from the mire of miseries. Let us try to live in India as a community which is morally exalted and ready to render every help to those who stand in need of it. To live a helpless life and to be treated as untouchables is shameful for a Musalman. We must first blot out untouchability and win the freedom of India. If we find after that that Hindu society is still intransi-

gent and means to continue the same treatment of us as they have done so far, we have every right to partition India into two comfortable homes, Hindustan and Pakistan. But where is that promised land ? What are its boundaries ? No one knows and perhaps will not know till doomsday. We must not run after a mirage, but should try to live in India as good citizens and morally a noble people. We must join hands with the lower strata of the other communities and clamour for social levelling and economic justice. I am sure that Nawabs and Knights of my own community will turn down my advice because they themselves do not believe in social levelling and econmic justice. Hindu capitalists want a Hindustan where they may be able to safely lord over the destinies of the poor classes of all the communities. Musalmans of high houses likewise want a Pakistan where they may exploit and rule over the lower classes of the Hindus and the Musalmans alike. Sikhs of the upper classes also want a Punjab where they may comfortably rule over and exploit Hindu, Muslim and Sikh masses. Partition of India is in fact the cry of the upper classes of all the three communities. It is not a communal demand, as some people think, but a stunt in order that the poor classes may not concentrate their thoughts and energies

on the all important questions of social and economic justice. It will be a very sad day for the masses of this country when the League and the Congress stop the glove fight, and the capitalists of both the communities join hands to exploit the people. This fight of the upper classes is a blessing in disguise. May God perpetuate it for the good of the masses!

But we Ahrars must not lose time in merely taking stock of the situation and go on criticising what the great guns of the Congress and the big drums of the League say and do. We represent those whose lips are sealed by the cares of to-morrow and for whom this world has become the vale of tears. Therefore it is our duty boldly to come forward and declare to the world that Ahrars stand for the following programme :

(1) Equal distribution of the wealth of the country ;

(2) Removal of untouchability ;

(3) Respect for every religion and complete autonomy to live according to Shariat.

If the Hindu community thwarts our way in any manner, then and then only should we join hands with Mr. Jinnah and raise the slogan of Pakistan. Muslims now refuse to live as serfs of the Hindus economically, and as their untouchables socially. Though we know that Pakistan is an

impracticable scheme, we will make up our differences with the Muslim League and fight those forces that keep us down. We are fighting for the freedom of India and at the same time we declare that the Musalman will not live as the under-dog of any community or class.

THE END